DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 976 JC 900 478

AUTHOR	Fideler, Elizabeth F., Ed.
TITLE	The Educational Forum: A Journal of Teaching, Learning & Professional Development. Volume One, Fall 1990.
INSTITUTION	Massachusetts Bay Community Coll., Watertown.
REPORT NO	ISSN-1051-7111
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	88p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publisher, Educational Forum, Massachusetts Bay Community College Press, 50 Oakland St., Wellesley, MA 02181 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	The Educational Forum: A Journal of Teaching, Learning & Professional Development; v1 Fall 1990
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Andragogy; Basic Writing; *College Instruction; College Programs; College Role; *Community Colleges; Cooperation; Court Reporters; Cultural Awareness; English (Second Language); *Instructional Innovation; Peer Teaching; Poetry; Remedial Reading; Second Language Instruction; Shorthand; Two Year Colleges; Writing Across the Curriculum; *Writing Instruction; Writing Laboratories

ABSTRACT

This inaugural journal issue presents the perspectives of Massachusetts Bay Community College's faculty, administrators, and students on various aspects of community college education as practiced at the college. The journal contains the following articles: (1) "Adult Second Language Beginning Reading," by Ann Hilferty; (2) "Making Education a Dialectical Process: Application of the Writing Center Model to the Creation of a New Learning Environment," by Joseph Saling; (3) "My Sessions in Peer Tutoring," by David Sharifi; (4) "A Community of Teachers and Learners," by Susan Andrien; (5) "A Case for Collaborative Inquiry and Dissent," by Eleanor A. Smith; (6) "Developing a Passion(?) for Writing Accounting!" by Philippe L. Joyal; (7) "An Experiment in Right Writing," by Jennifer Hicks; (8) "Charting a 'Course' in the ESL Classroom," by Elaine Wilson; (9) "Collaborative Project Work and the ESL Lab," by Glenn Gabbard; (10) "A Little Light on Poetry from Hawthorne," by Harold White; (11) "Classroom Coexistence: Written and Oral Communication," by Cynthia Lawton; (12) "Confessions of a (Former) Remedial Lady," by Susan Andrien; (13) "Andragogy, Self-Directed Learning and Critical Thinking," by James E. Wright; (14) "Mock Depositions Benefit Everyone," by Elizabeth O. Bailey and Deborah A. Brodeur; (15) "Why Seek NSRA (National Shorthand Reporters Association) Approval?" by Ann M. Farrey-Hart; and (16) "Adventures in Culture Sharing: Promoting the Mission of the Community College," by Cynthia R. Butters. (JMC)

ED322976

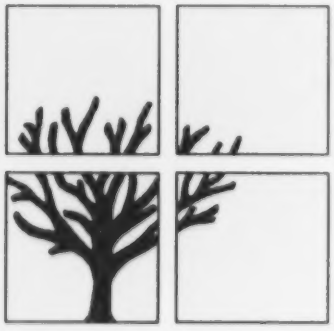
The Educational Forum

A Journal of Teaching, Learning
& Professional Development

Fall 1990 Volume One

Published by

Massachusetts Bay Community College Press
50 Oakland Street
Wellesley Hills, MA 02181



Publisher ..... Roger A. Van Winkle
General Editor ..... Elizabeth F. Fideler

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ISSN 1051-7111

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Printed by The Windsor Press Inc., DeFazio Building, Wellesley Hills, MA

JC 900 478

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Editor's Notes

Elizabeth F. Fideler

It is with great pleasure that I introduce *The Educational Forum*, Massachusetts Bay's new journal of teaching, learning, and professional development. This first volume presents the perspectives of faculty, administrators, and even a few students on various aspects of community college education as practiced at Massachusetts Bay.

By inviting professional discourse about teaching and learning, the college encourages reflection on and analysis of experience. These are oft-neglected yet powerful forms of professional development. Furthermore, the journal's emphasis is on thoughtful questioning rather than polished answers or neat formulas. That is, while the journal does report on several successful instructional and programmatic outcomes, more importantly it documents the authors' sincere and continuing efforts to discover a better modus operandi at the cutting edge of their respective academic fields.

The innovators who have contributed to this volume were writing for their colleagues as well as for educators at other community colleges. To paraphrase a line from Robert Boice's guide to productive writing: their writing is valuable not only because of what it does for others but also for what it does for them. Hence, *The Educational Forum* is not so much *about* professional development as it is a *medium for* professional development.

In the first article, Reading Facilitator Ann Hilferty identifies problems stemming from the gaps in knowledge about adult beginning second language reading and calls for materials, techniques, and guidelines that are appropriate to the reading needs of the many adult learners who come to college with second language reading problems.

Writing Specialist Joseph Saling advocates making classrooms truly collaborative learning environments. He would substitute the student-initiated conversation about learning that tends to occur in writing centers for the traditional authoritarian model of teaching.

Through his participation in Massachusetts Bay's Peer Tutoring Program, student David Sharifi quickly discovered that being a peer tutor requires him to be something more than a "junior teacher." In order to be helpful, he has to listen carefully and put himself in the student's place.

Coordinator of Writing Programs Susan Andrien introduces the middle section of the journal, which contains a cluster of essays of varying lengths written by members of Massachusetts Bay's Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines (CLAD) group.

CLAD co-chair Eleanor Smith describes her experience as a novice teacher of business courses who sought and finally found collaborative inquiry about teaching theory and practice. Another member of the business division, Phillippe Joyal, tells how he changed his attitudes about teaching enough to use writing as a teaching tool in accounting classes.

Working with students in a developmental academic writing course, Jennifer Hicks endeavors to get them to understand and respond to the differing expectations for language, content, and form of writing in their respective fields.

In her ESL classroom, Elaine Wilson tries to balance the requirements for logical thinking and presentation that conforms to rhetorical norms with respect for her students' diverse learning styles and idiosyncratic notions of logic. In his work with ESL students, Associate Dean for Alternative Instruction and Basic Disciplines Glenn Gabbard innovates with collaborative learning techniques and a meaningful class project, a publication to which all of his students contribute.

Involvement in the CLAD group has made humanities professor Harold White aware of the potential of "informal" writing for teaching American Literature. He is intrigued when one question about pedagogy leads to another. Participation in CLAD activities prompted Cynthia Lawton to incorporate written critiques, peer reviews, and self-analyses into her speech classes. She is happy to see that writing in tandem with classroom assessment not only helps students, but also enhances the instructor's effectiveness. The vivid insights into remedial education of CLAD co-chair Susan Andrien close this section of the journal.

The remainder of the journal contains contributions from Massachusetts Bay's MetroWest Campus in Framingham. Associate Dean for Career/Technical Programs James Wright adds a new twist to his review of the andragogical approach to adult education by establishing a rationale for integrating critical thinking theory with the notion of self-directed learning.

In a brief paean to experiential learning, Court Reporting students Elizabeth Bailey and Deborah Brodeur share the highlights of their student internship experience. Their instructor, Ann Farrey-Hart, who heads the Conference and Court Reporting Program, then explains the multiple benefits to programs like hers of seeking national accrediting board approval, e.g., the approval process helps the faculty to decide on appropriate goals and structure the learning environment accordingly.

Finally, Cynthia Butters, Practical Nursing Program chairperson, describes the evolution of a class project on nutrition into a campus-wide International Day celebration that teaches many valuable lessons in culture sharing.

Elizabeth F. Fideler is Associate Dean for Teaching/Learning and Professional Development and General Editor of the Mass Bay Press.

Adult Second Language Beginning Reading

Ann Hilferty
Reading Facilitator

The Surveys

An informal survey of research on second language teaching finds a welcome increase in the 1980s in the number of articles on adult second language reading. However, the greater number of these articles seem, by default, to define reading exclusively as an expert skill. Without distinguishing among levels of reading, most articles focus on the advanced reader and on higher order reading skills which presuppose already well-automated basic reading habits. This almost exclusive focus implies that all second language learners read in the same way and benefit from the same types of instructional and reading experiences, regardless of their previous literacy experiences in first and second languages. It further implies that there is no need for different instruction for beginning readers (Hilferty, 1990).

There is a parallel gap in second language teaching practice. A 1988 survey of adult second language literacy programs selected from among the best in the Cambridge/Boston area revealed a lack of integrated theory on reading and on its relation to second language learning. The teaching in these programs, although skillful, was not guided or supported by clearly articulated statements concerning levels of reading expertise, the relationships of reading to oral language mastery, or the connections between reading and writing skills. There was therefore also an absence of program rationales for diagnosis and assessment, the ordering of language content, the functions of speaking/listening activities and reading/writing activities, and creative ideas for the exploitation of knowledge about the intersection of first and second language literacy, and about adult learning (Hilferty, 1988).

While the advanced second language reader is increasingly well-served in the research literature and presumably in the classroom, the beginner is virtually ignored. The pervasive lack of reflective attention to the adult beginning reader in second language research and practice is mystifying; it suggests that two anachronistic assumptions are, in effect, subscribed to in second language education: (1) that reading, especially second language reading, is a subsidiary language skill derived exclusively from oral mastery, and (2) that, following this

idea, learning to read is a one-way transfer from speech to reading, a process which is essentially identical for beginning and experienced readers.

In spite of the great variety of models for language teaching currently exemplified in the field, in spite of rich theoretical diversity regarding second language acquisition, and in spite of research evidence disproving claims that skilled reading is independent of reliance on the text, is identical for all practitioners, or has a linear relationship with the other language skills, many teachers and researchers are still adhering to the anachronistic assumptions.

The observer of this situation can only conclude that the adult beginning second language reader is being short-changed with regard to instruction in language and literacy, and that in the light of insight into present and anticipated needs for adult second language proficiency and literacy, the field has a long way to go professionally.

The aim of this paper is to review briefly some of the evidence on the nature of the reading process and the reciprocity of reading with other language skills, and to encourage language and reading teachers to catch up with the evidence. There is clear evidence and increasing consensus on (1) the basic reading skills and their relations to advanced reading experience, and the fact that these bear implications for reading instruction, and (2) the reciprocity of the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in scaffolding each other toward increased overall language development. This evidence charges the teacher of the adult second language reading learner to pay more attention and different attention to the adult second language learner's reading needs, in order to promote the fullest language development consistent with what we know about reading, language development, and the adult learner.

At the same time, other professionals in the field must operationalize and make accessible to the teacher what is known. In addition to well-articulated theory as foundation, there is a need for congruent pedagogical applications for second language literacy instruction, and for tools for diagnosis, instruction, and assessment. To this end, the evidence charges the theoretician, the researcher, and the program designer, as well as the teacher, to expend effort on behalf of the needs of the beginning second language reader.

The Evidence

The two components of reading

Reading at any level consists of two components: word recognition, which becomes automatic with reading practice and comprises the bulk of the skilled

reading experience, and comprehension, which requires conscious thought (Ammon, 1989). Both word recognition and comprehension are present in all skilled reading, whether the simple reading for learning of the fourth grader, the more mature reading for multiple viewpoints of the high schooler, or the college student's reading for conceptual construction and reconstruction (Chall, 1983). The word recognition and comprehension are practiced simultaneously, and they must be acquired simultaneously (Adams, 1990). At the same time, since the acquisition of reading is a complex, multi-stage, interactive process, the allocation of the reader's attentional resources are not the same at every stage of reading development, or in every reading task or every part of every reading task (Just and Carpenter, 1987; Curtis, 1980). To be effective, reading instruction must take this into account.

The varying relation between oral and reading skills

Overall, there is not an invariant relation between speaking and reading; the relationship varies depending on learner, task and circumstances (Adams, 1990; Menyuk, 1984; Stotsky, 1984). At the most obvious level, the relationship between the oral and the reading/writing skills varies according to the situation. Stotsky's review of the research on development in written language reveals strong evidence that for first language readers, oral language experience is primary in early stages, but that as reading and writing develop, they become increasingly independent and reciprocal, facilitating further development in the spoken, as well as the written, language (Stotsky, 1984). For some second or foreign language readers, there may be an inversion of the contributions of mastery of the spoken and the written language codes, with the reading skills providing the bulk of the new language input being learned.

Sticht (1972) has shown that a beginning first language reader's listening ability greatly surpasses his/her reading ability, but as the learner progresses in reading, the gap between the two modes closes. For some, reading eventually surpasses listening as the premier mode of gaining information. Sticht notes that first language readers tend to continue to read somewhat below their listening levels, while second language readers tend to continue to read above theirs.

It is not infrequent for good child readers to write before they read (Adams, 1990). When children start to write, they use language structures they commanded at a lower level in speaking. As their handwriting and spelling reach automaticity, they use more complex language structures, until eventually the complexity of their writing surpasses that of their speaking (Halliday, 1989; Perera, 1986).

Spoken and written forms of language seem to be influenced by learners' modal capacities for language. Since there seems to be a limit on the listener's tolerance for complexity of sentences, for example, certain complex sentence constructions appear seldom in speech, but almost exclusively in writing (Biber, 1988).

The critical factor in learning to read English

Oral command of the language alone is not the critical factor in learning to read. Phonemic awareness is essential (Adams, 1990). It is true that most first language learners come initially to understand written language through their understanding of speech. However, they have to understand more than speech alone to learn how to read an alphabetic language. As learners develop command of speaking and listening, their knowledge of phonemes, the sound building-blocks of syllables and words, becomes part of their unconscious 'background knowledge' (Adams, 1990; Halliday, 1989).

However, in order to learn to read an alphabetic writing system, it is necessary to have conscious, analytical knowledge (i.e., 'phonemic awareness') of the language's sound system. As humans are not programmed to consciously access this deep, experiential language knowledge, something is needed for us to learn how to become aware of it: either a lengthy and subtle literacy apprenticeship, or direct instruction, or both (Adams, 1990).

Studies of normal and dyslexic child readers, the deaf, second language readers, and illiterate adults, all indicate that phonemic awareness is necessary for skilled reading of English, regardless of oral mastery or age of the reader, and that direct instruction in phonemic awareness is necessary for those who have not acquired it through natural interaction in their literate home communities (Adams, 1990; Morais, et al., 1987). Evidence that hearing- and speech-impaired individuals, as well as some non-fluent second language learners, do learn to read their target language, proves that this instruction can be provided in the absence of oral command.

Reciprocity among the language skills

There are reciprocal effects between reading and oral skills. That is, as oral skills facilitate reading, so do reading skills, as they develop, facilitate the further development of oral skills. There is a great amount of evidence that as learners advance in reading skill, there is feedback from their reading to their language development. This multi-directional, reciprocal feedback is varied, and is particularly evident with the reading of those experiencing rapid language growth,

such as young children learning to read in their first language, or adults learning to read in a second language.

Phonemic awareness itself probably occurs through the learner's experience with print. Even the concept of 'word' itself is usually not learned until the learner experiences words in print, separated from each other by spaces. Phonics instruction and experience with print allow learners to develop a "visual vocabulary" (Adams, 1990; Ehri and Wilce, 1979; Read, 1978). As learners begin to read an alphabetic language, the appearance of the printed language appears to become established in memory as a representation of speech. That is, readers start to remember the visual shapes of syllables and words (Ehri and Wilce, 1985). There is evidence for this in learners' invented spelling, their memory for 'silent letters', and their improved pronunciation.

Phonemic awareness seems to help both first and second language learners to understand the spoken language better (Read and Ruyter, 1985). Learning to spell improves listening ability, and vice versa (Adams, 1990). Reading spelling patterns allows readers to collect data to match written with spoken words (Gough and Hillinger, 1980).

Flege (1988) points out that the literate second language learner uses both auditory and visual information to add to language knowledge, and that the choice of which to use may depend, simply, on which is more available. In addition, the use of symbols as visual aids assists with instruction in sound recognition (both listening and reading), and production (both speaking and writing). Reading improves listening (Sticht, 1982). Seeing a word is a better way of remembering it than either hearing or saying the word (Adams, 1990). Having phonetic images of words can be especially useful in helping students understand classroom speech as it involves increasingly unfamiliar words and abstract concepts (Adams, 1990). Literate adults 'hear' words according to their expected spelling patterns rather than how the words are actually pronounced.

Implications for Instruction

What are the implications of these and other insights for research and instruction? Try to visualize a particular adult student before asking, "So what?" Imagine a recently-arrived immigrant in her thirties. We would find, if we had access to longitudinal psychometric data, that the woman's phonetic sensitivity had steadily decreased since she was around eight years old (Flege, 1989). If literate in her first language, she would thus be increasingly sensitive to orthographic rather than to phonetic language representation. At the same time, as a beginning second language speaker, she would be more dependent on

auditory data than most first language speakers her age, in spite of her decreased auditory capability. She would long ago have slowed down in the acquisition of syntax in her first language, although not in her vocabulary acquisition. She would tend to think more abstractly than she had done as a youth, substituting complex conceptualizations for simpler, more flexible concepts, and storing information semantically rather than phonetically. In general, she would be slowing down behaviorally.

She would find that these characteristics, already apparent in her first language context, were magnified in her second language context. Her primary learning task, acquiring a complex second language system, would overlap considerably with her mastery of her first language system. She would be learning the second language system as an adult, responsible for many more registers and constraints than those required by children; and she would be learning it in a new culture, lacking much of the contextual information on which she relied in her first culture, and finding many aspects of her second cultural context confusing, if not meaningless.

Literate or not in her first language, she would probably feel in need of access to all the resources she could get, and reading should provide a major resource. Unable to rely on her ears alone for accurate language data, she would benefit from instruction based on integrated knowledge of the English language and writing system, and from practice which took into account the synergism of the language modalities, as well as from sensitivity to her overall personal goals. The most effective instructional plans would be those grounded in the facts that reading an alphabetic language depends on phonemic awareness and knowledge of sound-spelling relationships, that there is a need for direct instruction when this knowledge has not already been acquired, that there is a progression of achievement in skilled reading, and that there are complex interactions among the language modalities.

As the surveys of research literature and of local second language programs have shown, however, there are not yet available the integrated curricula and materials needed to make flexible instruction available to all who now need it and to the many more who will need it in the near future. This is a call to teachers and other language professionals to address the need for theories of second language reading which are realistic, comprehensive, holistic, integrative, flexible, and standard:

(1) *realistic* in that they attend to the evidence about reading in English;
(2) *comprehensive* in that they start with beginning reading and address all the stages in reading development common to the second language learner;

(3) *holistic* in that they attend to all of the components of the multi-level, interactive process of reading;
(4) *integrative* in that they view oral language skills and reading and writing skills as reciprocal, each a language mode in its own right, and each overlapping with and facilitating the others;
(5) *flexible* in that they accommodate teaching plans which can be used across the range of second language situations, e.g., for students at different levels of first and second language literacy and oral proficiency; and
(6) *standard* in that they suggest instructional and assessment concepts which are meaningful across different types of programs and students.

Such theories, curricula, and teaching materials should provide matrices for the design of language and reading programs where they do not yet exist, and for the assessment and calibration of those which already do exist.

Implications for the Reading Program at Massachusetts Bay

The problems stemming from the gaps in knowledge about adult beginning second language reading are particularly apparent in a community college reading program. The Massachusetts Bay reading classes, for example, typically include a greater than average representation of adult learners reading at below Grade 6 reading level as measured by standardized reading tests, and a good number of second language speakers. When it comes to developing the reading program here, we find all the problems predicted in the literature: few of the materials, techniques and guidelines we need are already in place (Sticht, 1988; Chall, Heron, and Hilferty, 1987). We are trying hard, however, to identify and use what is available in research and validated practice, and hope, also, to contribute to the research through our own continued efforts.

About half of the students in reading courses at Massachusetts Bay are second language speakers, who are enrolled in vocational or academic transfer programs. This particular makeup gives the College the opportunity to frame our developing curricula and research projects through the lenses of two of the most promising, relevant trends in program design, competency-based education and workplace-reading education.

The competency-based and workplace-reading approaches offer specific, real-world contexts and perspectives within which attention can productively be given to the concerns of the adult second language beginning reader addressed in this article: efficient word recognition and comprehension, a developmental

perspective, the relationships of written language skills with oral language skills, and instructional plans which synthesize knowledge about adult second language learners.

We are hopeful that, while continuing to refine ways of meeting our students' reading needs over the next few years, we can also study a number of second language reading problems:

- the needs of second language, low elementary readers with relation to academic and vocational literacy;
- descriptive stages of adult, second language reading;
- assessment and diagnosis of the adult beginning reader;
- the reciprocity of the language skills in second language reading courses; and
- effective instructional approaches and techniques.

In meeting the needs of our students, we expect to contribute toward a redress of the imbalance in the research literature on adult second language reading.

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Making Education a Dialectical Process: Application of the Writing Center Model to the Creation of a New Learning Environment

Joseph Saling
Writing Specialist

Introduction

Current theories about the nature and the making of knowledge indicate both the advantages and desirability of making classrooms collaborative learning environments. Such environments, however, may not be possible, given the responsibility of teachers both to teach and to certify student learning. True collaboration requires partnerships between students and teachers that are difficult to establish. Stephen North's "The Idea of a Writing Center" (1984) provides a model for revising classroom teaching that can at least partially resolve the paradox.

Collaborative Learning

The ideal educational experience is a process of intellectual inquiry that results in the expansion of the horizons of knowledge. Traditionally, it involves a learner and an instructor, who serves as a guide leading the learner to some new perspective from which to view those horizons. In the ideal situation, those horizons of knowledge are expanded for both participants--student and teacher. Recent shifts in the way we view knowledge and in the ways we apply that view in our attempts to educate students[1] have had a profound effect on the methods we employ to arrive at those new perspectives.

In particular, the shifts have led us not only to a new student-centered pedagogy but also to an examination of our traditional view of authority in the classroom. If knowledge is a social construct and if students learn best through a process of collaborative learning, then authority no longer resides in the teacher but in the process through which students and teacher arrive at the desired ends (ideally, the mutually agreed upon ends) of a course of instruction. All of these changes, coupled with the emphasis in recent years on reaching out to the disenfranchised student, suggest the possibility of achieving the ideals of a democratic society as they relate to education. Not only will higher education be made accessible to all members of that society, but education will become a path

along which all students can move to a full participatory status as citizens rather than remaining, as it sometimes seems, a wall of exclusion.

There is, however, a paradox inherent in our American system of higher education, and this paradox is especially noticeable at the junior and community college level. Our institutions of higher learning exist as agencies of certification, a purpose consistent with students' reasons for attending these institutions, and the instrument of that certification is teacher evaluation of classroom performance. As long as a classroom teacher remains charged with the obligation of evaluating and certifying a student's performance, that person remains the central authority for knowledge. So, despite the fact that we extol the benefits of collaborative learning and applaud the shifting of authority from the teacher to the interaction between teacher and student, we are institutionally enjoined from employing the kinds of classroom activity that would enable students and teacher to participate fully in the new approaches to learning.

There are ways around this injunction. Mastery learning and contract grading are two. By themselves, though, they are not sufficient to ensure that we take full advantage of the benefits inherent in a collaborative approach to education. What is needed is not only new methods for approaching learning but a new atmosphere that resembles the learning environment existing in many campus writing centers. In that environment, both faculty and students can explore the entire range of learning possibilities offered by the new student-centered pedagogy.

In mastery learning, students receive credit for a course only after demonstrating proficiency at a prescribed level of skill or understanding. The student can thus enter into a collaborative arrangement with the teacher or with other students or with both teacher and other students to pursue the kinds of activities necessary to arrive at that level of proficiency. Under a contract arrangement, the student and teacher come to agreement about the amount and the quality of work the student intends to produce and the grade the teacher will award for that work. Both the mastery level program and the contract arrangement remove the onus of evaluation from the learning process.

In the first case, the student knows precisely the degree of proficiency she must demonstrate and what will be required to demonstrate it, and since evaluation is based on her ability to demonstrate and not on the subjective judgment of a teacher, she is free to work with the teacher in a non-judgmental relationship to discover ways to demonstrate her proficiency. The teacher then becomes a coach, especially if the levels of proficiency are externally defined and assessed.

The contract method admits even more opportunities for collaborative learning. As long as the contract is a product of negotiation between the student and teacher, both can enter into a partnership in the effort to arrive at knowledge. The knowledge that the instructor brings to the process no longer serves as a basis for subjective evaluation. Instead, it serves first as a means for guiding the negotiation in that the instructor can confirm for the student the minimal level of work that would be acceptable for the proper certification. The student could, of course, contract to learn more, or, if circumstances permitted, less. Then, after the negotiation, the instructor's knowledge can be used as a resource in the student's efforts to achieve the agreed upon goals of their educational encounter.

Both methods, if they are to be truly collaborative, require a commitment from the institution and the instructor to the principles of collaborative learning and a student-centered pedagogy. That commitment involves an element that is surprisingly difficult to find within the walls of academe. Both methods require trust in the student's ability to define the objectives of her own education and to make choices that will enable her to achieve those objectives. If the commitment from the institution and the instructor is missing and if the methods are employed as a substitute for a more traditional scale of grading with the same reliance on subjective evaluation of classroom performance, then the methods do not bring the institution or the student any closer to collaborative learning than current, more traditional methods of evaluation do.

There is another problem too. Students are not used to being responsible for their learning, especially students represented in the shifting demographics of community colleges. Nor do they necessarily enter the institution with the desire to learn. The plaint is familiar to experienced teachers: "Tell us what you want," the students say, "and we'll do it." What the student is looking for is a certificate, and the way he wants to get it is by being judged by someone who has the knowledge to give him and the power to tell him whether or not he has gotten it. Unless the student sees the teacher as a full participant in the effort to learn, and unless the student perceives that she has the right to determine what it is she wants to learn, authority will always remain in the hands of the teacher. No amount of theoretical speculation will turn the classroom into the arena of collaborative learning it can become. For collaboration to occur, students and teacher must be committed to becoming partners in the exploration of subject matter and be committed to working together to find the best way to acquire the desired knowledge.

North's Writing Center Model

Stephen North (1984) has described the idea of a writing center by drawing an analogy between what happens in the center and the kind of dialectic employed by Socrates in the public squares of Athens. Of course, Socratic dialogue is not a new technique for teachers. Teaching by a question-and-answer method has a lot to recommend it, but the question-and-answer method is traditionally a Socratic dialogue in form only, not spirit. The true Socratic dialogue is a dialectic in which participants explore ideas in an effort to arrive at agreement about what is "true" and what is "false." It is an open-ended exploration of ideas, a process of intellectual inquiry that has as its goal the discovery of knowledge for both participants. There is no set agenda in terms of a predetermined right or wrong. Thus, the Socratic dialogue in its purest sense is collaborative and is the kind of discussion professionals engage in at conferences or behind their desks with their office mates. It is the kind of discussion that goes on in the journals. And it is exactly the kind of dialogue that occurs in many writing centers.

North has pointed out that, in the ideal writing center, strategies for instruction are neither derived from some general model nor "based on where the student ought to be because she is a freshman or a sophomore." Instead they start where the student is and "move where the student moves" (p. 439). Perhaps an even more important distinction between instruction in writing centers and the traditional classroom is why it happens. In the writing center, "conferences are the writer's idea; he or she seeks us out" (p. 442). What this means is that a student in a writing center enters into the instructional process at a time when he is ready and at time when he knows what he wants. The student does not go to the instructor to show what has been done, but rather to get help in knowing what to do next:

> Whereas going to keep a conference with a teacher is, almost by definition, a kind of goal or deadline--a stopping place--going to talk in the writing center is a means of getting started, or a way to keep going (p. 442).

North goes on to say that

> What these differences boil down to, in general pedagogical terms, are timing and motivation. The fact is, not everyone's interest in writing, their need or desire to write or learn to write, coincides with the fifteen or thirty weeks they spend in writing courses--especially when, as is currently the case at so many institutions, those weeks are required (p. 442).

Although North is talking about students learning to write, what he says is applicable to the educational process in general. Every teacher has in mind a model of the ideal student. For any experienced teacher, that model is not based on some abstract concept of what the ideal student should be but rather on the memory of real students who are eager to learn and ready to be instructed. They push the limits of the course's curriculum. They master the material the instructor wants them to master, and they ask intelligent questions. They pursue not just the material listed in the syllabus but the implications of where that material leads. They want to give more than the instructor asks for, and in doing so, they make teaching exciting. The teacher comes away from the interaction with these students with a new way of seeing and a renewed interest in his or her specific discipline.

What is interesting about these ideal students is that they can be present in an instructor's class at any level. We would expect to find them in a graduate seminar, yet if we have taught for any length of time, we know we are as likely to find them in an introductory level course. What makes these students stand out is the fact that they care about what they are learning, and they are ready to learn it. The prescribed curriculum is incidental. They are not in a class because they are required to be there (although that may have been true at the beginning of the term) but because they want to be and are ready to be there. What they are learning is important to them.

A good teacher finds ways to engender in students a desire to learn. Once the spark has been struck, a good teacher finds ways to keep it alive and to encourage students to work to their full capacity for learning. Finally, a good teacher is attuned to the possibility of learning along with those students and seeks out opportunities to do so. When that happens, true collaboration in the learning process has begun.

Collaborative learning is a synergistic process from which the teacher takes away as much as the student does and both come away with more than they contributed. It is not a way to pawn off the responsibility for instruction by dividing students into groups and asking them to teach themselves. Unless the teacher actively participates in the learning process, the student is deprived of a major resource. If because of the dictates of a particular curriculum, the knowledge a teacher has is parceled out and then used as a rod against which student progress is measured, there can be no expansion of the horizons of knowledge, except by chance, for either student or teacher. The student will have acquired only enough information to be certified, information the student already

knew was there, and the teacher will have acquired nothing new beyond the satisfaction of having fulfilled his minimal contractual obligation to both the student and the institution.

It follows, then, that the greatest contributions the writing center model can offer to the revision of our educational process are its freedom from a given curriculum and its reliance on talk as its chief means of instruction. North says that the lifeblood of writing centers is the opportunity those who work there have "to talk with excited writers at the height of their engagement with their work" (p. 443). Any teacher can substitute the word "learners" for "writers" to imagine the possibilities such conversations create. When the learner is excited and truly engaged, then learning must follow.

Most experienced teachers are also aware of the paucity of such conversation in a curriculum-based program of instruction, especially at the freshman or sophomore level. At best, we have such conversations with, on the average, one or two students a term. And all of us have experienced spells of varying length when it seems no student is engaged and no student wants to talk in the ways we want to talk about the subjects we are teaching. Such conversation is not possible unless we have time and are willing to begin where the student is and end where the student wants to go. No matter how willing we are, time is always at a premium when the curriculum is uppermost in our minds.

Even if we do have time and both the teaching load and the curriculum are flexible enough to permit the kinds of conversation collaborative learning calls for, we still have the problem of the way students perceive us. Students are conditioned to think of us as evaluators, and the risk of exposing their ignorance, of making a bad impression on the judge, is too large when certification is so important. Finally, even those of us who have, at least in theory, embraced the new student-centered pedagogy too often find, as Mary Rose O'Reilly (1989) has pointed out, that the conversations we want to have are not the conversations students want. And rather than making the effort to find out exactly where those students are in their learning, we are too eager to "exterminate all the brutes" (p. 142) and return to the comfort of the old authoritarian model of teaching.

It will be a long time before education in America changes enough to allow us to fully realize the benefits of collaborative learning. Perhaps the change will never come. The American economic system and the American social system are both too dependent on certification to allow our nation's universities and colleges, and especially our community colleges, to become the utopian centers of learning they can become. The livelihoods of too many students depend on their being certified for us to simply rebel and say there is a better way. But there are things we can do to bring us closer to a system of education that is truly educational.

Recommendations for Practice

We can be open to the possibilities of teaching methods, such as mastery learning and contract grading, that can create new collaborative opportunities in the classroom. We can also become less concerned with our roles as evaluators and more concerned with entering into learning partnerships with our students. To enter into those partnerships, we have to be willing to be more open to alternative means of assessment. External assessment[2] can free us from our traditional role as evaluators and make our participation in the students' learning less threatening, less judgmental and more collaborative. Being willing to participate in external assessment does not mean we need to surrender academic freedom. Classroom teachers should be intimately involved in every aspect of the assessment process from determining standards to finding legitimate ways to measure students against those standards and then participating in the evaluation of student performance. But as long as that evaluation is external to the classroom, what happens in the classroom changes. Teachers become partners with students in discovering ways to meet those standards.

The most important thing we can do as teachers is learn to trust our students' abilities to define what they want out of an education and then help them learn to trust that ability themselves. Here is where the writing center model offers the most promise. North has defined the idea of writing centers as places "whose primary responsibility, whose only reason for being, is to talk to writers" (p. 446). Why shouldn't our campuses become places whose primary responsibility, whose only reason for being is to talk to learners? They can if we take an active part in making them that.

Many campuses have writing and learning centers with programs not attached to any curricular goals but rather focussed on providing opportunities for students to work with one another and with experts in mastering skills and content in various disciplines. These centers are truly student centered, do not involve evaluation, and offer programs in which students can voluntarily participate. If those centers do not exist on our own campuses, we can work to establish them and make them an integral part of our students' educational experience. If they already exist, we can make an effort to become involved in their activities.

If faculty are not only allowed but encouraged to work in such centers, if faculty have an opportunity outside the classroom to meet students concerned about what they are learning, two important things can happen. First, faculty can see that students do care about what they learn and are capable, when given the opportunity, of defining their own educational goals; and second, partnerships can

be formed in the classroom between students and teachers that can only lead to genuine collaboration in pushing back the horizons of knowledge for both. That is, education can happen.

Notes

1. See, for example, Kenneth Bruffee's (1986) survey of social constructionist theory. For examples of the ways the new theories have had an impact on our approaches to teaching, see Trimbur (1989) and Reither and Vipond (1989).

2. When I speak of external assessment, I mean assessment that is external to the classroom but not external to the goals and the purposes of the class, which should be either independently or collaboratively defined by the teachers who actually teach the class. I am not suggesting that the teachers should willingly submit to state-mandated or even institutionally-mandated assessment policies that attempt to control or dictate the content of a course of instruction. The challenge is to find ways to remove evaluation from the interaction between student and teacher so that each sees the other as a partner in the learning process. Some teachers have attempted to meet this challenge by inviting outside readers to participate in evaluating student work and providing feedback to students. Others have instituted portfolio reviews (again with outside readers) at the end of a term as a way of determining how well students have mastered the material the course was designed to cover.

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My Sessions in Peer Tutoring

David Sharifi

The following is an excerpt from a paper written by student David Sharifi who took part in Massachusetts Bay's Peer Tutoring Program. One of the goals of the program is to help tutors to define how they can help other students. A tutor is not meant to be what David has termed "a junior teacher." The tutor's role includes helping students to involve themselves in the course content, in effect helping them to take an active role in their studies. David relates how he came to an understanding of what a tutor is.

When I was registering for the Fall semester of 1989, I never expected to sign up for a course labeled STU 100, a critical thinking course required by the school. I felt that I already had too many courses and the amount of work required was immense. I had to find a quick route out. The first time I went to the meeting of this course, I found out that a student can earn half the amount of points needed for the course by tutoring other students. I knew I was very good in mathematics, so I decided to earn half of my points the easy way.

How do students know if they are qualified to tutor other students? I thought that I knew the answer; I should have no problems tutoring math. During the required training meetings, I discovered that my understanding of the word ***tutor*** was completely wrong. To me, a tutor was a junior teacher. At the very first meeting, our trainer asked, "What is a tutor and what is his/her job?" No one could come up with a solid answer. She asked if we knew what a tutor is ***not*** supposed to do? I was lost: what did she mean? At the end of that meeting I had a very good idea of what a tutor is not supposed to do, but I still didn't know what I was ***supposed*** to do. Over the course of the semester, I would begin to learn the answer to this question.

My first tutorial session was with a student named Fred. As I waited for him to arrive, I couldn't help but wonder about the questions he was going to ask me and whether I would know the answers to them. Fred walked into the lab and introduced himself. I asked him what he was having problems with. He referred to logarithms, so I knew he was in Pre-calculus. Applying the method that I had learned from the training meeting, I didn't do his work for him; instead I asked him to explain to me what he ***did*** understand about logs. He lost me very fast. I knew he had no idea what he was talking about.

I wasn't sure what to do, so I put myself in Fred's place. I took him back to the basics of exponents. I asked him many questions and he gave me many correct answers. I slowly directed him towards logs by explaining that logs are just mathematical questions about exponents. By the end of the session Fred knew what logs were, and I was feeling good about myself.

The next session was with a student named Steve. This time I felt confident and superior. Steve was also in Pre-calculus. He had the same problem as Fred: logs. I said to myself that it should not be difficult since I had been so successful in helping Fred with the same problem the day before. I tried the same approach on Steve, but I didn't get very far. Steve didn't even know the basic rules of exponents. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to give him the answers to the problems that he brought with him; I wanted to make him understand the questions. He kept losing me. He kept telling me that he understood, but I knew that he was lost. I went through the book with him, but he still didn't comprehend. Both of us were frustrated.

Thinking that the failure was my fault, I referred Steve to another tutor named Joe. A week later, I heard from Joe that Steve had dropped out of Pre-calculus. I felt happy and sad at the same time--happy because the feeling of guilt had left me, but sad because I couldn't help thinking that I hadn't encouraged Steve enough to make him try harder.

My third session was with a girl named Beth. I went through the same routine, asking questions about what she didn't understand. She told me that she had difficulties with the application of differential problems. I didn't want to use the same method on her that I had used on Fred and Steve because of failure with Steve. I asked Beth to do a problem from the homework. She did three quarters of the work and stopped and told me what she didn't understand. I told her to go ahead and do what she thought was right. When I saw her making mistakes, I didn't say anything and waited until she was through. Then I asked if she knew the rule that applies to derivatives. Her answer was yes. Then I asked her which rule would work for that particular problem. She showed me, then a big smile came on her face. I felt proud of myself. Our session was only for half an hour--the most productive one yet!

The next two sessions were with Fred. I was happy that he kept coming back for help. It proved to me that I had been successful with him. He was having problems with graphing. First I went over the basics of "x" and "y" intercepts and the second time I explained why slope was necessary and helped him to understand parabolas. I learned that Fred was a bright student; he just didn't do the problems that his teacher assigned him to do. I told him about the simplicity of math and how it could be understood better if the assignments were completed.

I must admit that I learned a lot from the five tutorial sessions that I had. I not only became familiar with the word *tutor*, but I also learned the math material all over again. At the same time, my respect for teachers grew. I now understand the tough job that they have teaching students of all calibers, and I envy them the skill it takes to adapt to so many different needs.

A Community of Teachers and Learners

Susan Andrien
Coordinator, Writing Programs

In late 1987, Frances Winter (who was then Chair of the English Department) and I began talking about the prospect of getting together with faculty from "non-writing" disciplines to talk about our concern with students' abilities to read and write in college. We knew that on other campuses writing across the curriculum was becoming the focus for curricular reform. Frances and I were excited by the possibilities, but we really didn't have such lofty goals; we just wanted to create a public forum for the many private conversations that we had been having with other teachers about writing.

Twenty-one faculty showed up for our first meeting. At first, the concerns we talked about that afternoon were familiar from those hallway conversations: what could we do about our students' limited ability to write and read? Why did our students seem so unaware of the *importance* of writing in college? Why wasn't it obvious to them that they would be at a disadvantage in life if they never learned to write and read well? As we continued to discuss the problem, we got beyond the issue of students' shortcomings and started to talk about our own: the difficulty we had in dealing with diverse language abilities in classes; our frustrations about time and class size; the sense, on the part of teachers of content courses, that dealing with language issues is not part of the job; our need to learn to respond to student writing in more encouraging ways. A clear idea emerged from this discussion: we wanted to be able to address the needs of students in our classrooms more effectively, and we believed that we could work together to make that goal possible.

This was the beginning of CLAD. We named ourselves the committee on "Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines" rather than the more commonly used "writing across the curriculum" because we wanted to maintain a focus on reading and critical thinking, not just on writing. We decided to ask President Van Winkle for support, including a Professional Day that would focus on these issues. The President responded with even greater enthusiasm than we had hoped and found funding for faculty summer workshops for two consecutive years, as well as the Professional Day in April 1989. These professional development activities allowed us to develop expertise as teachers who know how to use language to strengthen learning. The heart of CLAD, however, has always been the faculty members who come to meetings week after week to share their experiences and examine their classroom practice.

Why do we keep on meeting, no matter how busy we are, semester after semester? Wouldn't you think that we would finally get it right and go on to some other project? Or, in the words of a skeptical colleague, "go find some new buzzword"? The answer, for most of us, is that we are better teachers when we meet than we are when we don't.

Researchers have noted that writing across the curriculum (WAC) programs can do a great deal to improve teaching and learning, but they also warn that successful programs require effort that is hard to sustain. To maintain energy, WAC programs need to build in constant re-evaluation and change. These goals are particularly appropriate in an open-enrollment school like Massachusetts Bay, because rapid changes in our student population demand that programs and teaching be revised constantly in order to remain sensitive to student needs. In a sense, change is our only constant. But the need for ongoing change in our curricula and methodologies also means that we are often too busy to take on something new. What we hope is that CLAD can provide support for teachers who want to address the issue of literacy in their classes.

Ken Bruffee describes collaborative learning as a process of "reacculturating" oneself with the help of a transitional community that can "provide an agenda for conversation and sustain us while we learn the language, mores, and values of the cultural community we are trying to join" (1988, p. 8). As Bruffee and others have observed, teachers as well as students need this kind of support group in order to make the profound kinds of changes that are necessary to effective learning and teaching. CLAD has become such a transitional community for me and many others. I have learned a lot about teaching from Phil Joyal, Martha McGandy, Jennifer Hicks, Phyllis Gale, Ellie Smith, Harold White, Martha Rowland, Glenn Gabbard, Anna Manseau, Frances, and the others whose essays follow in this journal. More importantly, working together has taught us all more about the value of community in our work.

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A Case for Collaborative Inquiry and Dissent

Eleanor A. Smith
Assistant Professor of Management

I am a good teacher. But I also count myself among the many who acknowledge that the search for the meaning of "good" will never be over. To admit that the search will be continuous is a new way of thinking for me. When I first started to teach at the college level, seven and a half years ago, I worried a lot about how long it might take to become a truly excellent professor and thought that there must be one best way to get there. By taking an active role in collaborative efforts with colleagues over the past three years, I have finally become comfortable with the idea that good teaching is a developmental process, a matter of "living the mystery" (Palmer, 1990), a process that is, by nature, fraught with conflict and the discomfort that comes with making changes.

Parker J. Palmer, a sociologist with lots of experience teaching college students, currently writes and presents professional development workshops about the ways of knowing, teaching, and learning. Before I got involved with any of Massachusetts Bay's initiatives that focused on the improvement of teaching and learning, I had never heard of him. I had not heard of educators Ken Bruffee, John Trimbur, or Pat Cross either. I later learned that it is not unusual for instructors to be ignorant of ideas on collaborative learning strategies or the role of the teacher as an active learner in the classroom, even in an institution devoted solely to teaching.

> Teachers in the disciplines rarely read any of the journals in education. Despite a great deal of good research on every conceivable question related to student evaluation of teaching, for example, few faculty outside of education have any knowledge of these findings, or even know where to locate them... (Cross, 1988, p. 6).

Here, at the community college as well as at other teaching institutions, we are charged with the ever-challenging task of instruction, without having to deal constantly with the "publish or perish" dilemma. We have no teaching assistants, and our classes are large and extremely diverse. There is no extra time for research. As a result, the majority of community college teachers rarely conduct or write up the results of their own research projects, with dissemination to the broader educational community in mind. And so, if we do not have to publish, we have little incentive to look at or discuss what has already been published on teaching theory and practice.

While this seems to be a narrow-minded conclusion, especially when made in the context of an organization devoted to the ideals of learning, it can be better understood if looked at from the point of view of the content teacher.

> ...professors of education taking the message to professors in the disciplines are often rejected on the grounds that the less knowledgeable are trying to educate the more knowledgeable. Credibility to college teachers is a matter of knowledge of subject matter, and advising on teaching methods without knowledge of subject matter is suspect. (When the ag-extension agent gave advice on growing beans, he presumably knew his beans.) (Cross, p. 6).

Since we are not in the habit of constantly exposing ourselves to articles written by the best in the field of educational theory, we spend most of our time keeping abreast of developments within our narrower disciplines--we know our beans. I teach business courses, so I might be inclined to read up on current changes in accounting practices and their tax implications, or to read the latest analysis of supply-side economics and the Reagan era of government. However, for all the merit that lies in the review of discipline-specific articles, such exposure offers no information about *how* to transfer what we have learned to our students.

With no requirement to share what we learn about teaching or about how our students learn, via publication for the purpose of earning tenure, we often become isolated in our individual searches for better instructional techniques. I believe this is especially true for a novice. Isolation forces the individual teacher to limit the risk associated with untested or radical change and base his experiments upon the opinions of a trusted senior faculty member, usually a colleague who teaches the same subject matter. New teachers typically listen but do not seriously question. This approach is safe. It does not involve admitting ignorance to many.

I am reminded of how students look to us in the classroom as individual authorities about our subject areas and feel safe spitting back on exams the facts that we have given them. I am also reminded that, when given the opportunity to *use* those facts, terms, or principles during an in-class discussion, those same students are either inarticulate or simply mute. Perhaps this happens because we have asked them to take the risk of testing what they know, in front of so many others. It also might be due to the fact that the teacher's authority confirms students' disenfranchised positions and therefore sets up fears of saying the "wrong" thing.

This feeling of safety that comes from listening to and agreeing with only one or two authorities might actually begin a debilitating process that Palmer calls "privatization." Palmer applies the term to those silent students in our classrooms--the ones who refuse to engage in any meaningful discussions, case

analyses, or group work that we teachers design for their more active learning. These students seem to constitute the majority in the classrooms of the community college.

It is my belief that they are silent because teachers, curricula, or school systems collectively have not given them the training necessary to learn the ways of knowing or enough chances to practice thinking about and then speaking their thoughts (Kurfiss, 1989). It is my contention also that, like the students in our classrooms, we teachers can become too silent about or even resigned to our own teaching methodologies. And this will happen if we are not given, or do not take advantage of, a safe setting devoid of "authority," which offers the chance to talk, listen to, thoughtfully analyze, and question the words of lots of other voices about what has worked or what does not seem to work in our separate classrooms.

Silent privatization has been called other things by other theorists and practitioners. Dewey and Bruffee, for example, refer to it as the inevitable alienation that comes when the teacher is viewed as the hierarchical authority (Trimbur, 1985; 1989). Regardless of whose terminology one uses to describe this effect, it is something that happens to the students in our classes when they become spectators or simple depositories for the facts that we give them. When Palmer talks about students who avoid getting involved with debate or discussions led by teachers who want students to ***do*** something with their new knowledge, he says that it is inaccurate to decide that those students are lazy or stupid.

> ...the silence of many students is the result of disempowerment....Students are often marginal to the society by virtue of their youth, their lack of a productive role, their dependency on the academy for legitimation. Deprived of any sense of public place or power, they withdraw into the private realm where they keep their thoughts to themselves and, sometimes, *from* themselves....the silent one is...the victim of a system that denies his or her story, that ignores or punishes people who tell tales that threaten the standard version of truth. (Palmer, p. 15).

I have had the same experience that Palmer talks about, but I have had it as a novice teacher, trying to find my way in the academy. I did not feel enfranchised enough to claim my own truth in the open or to make it vulnerable to the scrutiny of others (Palmer, 1990).

It seems to me that a parallel exists between students' privatization and faculty isolation. Faculty can also become isolated and may refuse to take part in the dialogue necessary to think rationally and analytically about why students are not learning as well as desired. Self-imposed separation from that complicated

but very important problem can also lead to negative or self-defeating attitudes. It is safer for me to say that students today "just don't have what it takes" than it is to argue a different viewpoint and risk testing what I think I know in front of so many of my more experienced peers.

But with honest and sustained encouragement to talk with greater numbers of faculty, many of whom know different strains of beans because they are external to our particular disciplines, the conversation about what really matters to us as teachers can begin. If such a forum does not exist (or if it does exist but faculty across *all* disciplines do not take part), then teachers who want to try new ways of approaching their students will probably not do so. A support system, filled with often dissenting opinions backed up with different experiences and viewpoints, is necessary.

At Massachusetts Bay, this has been done in a professional development forum which combines weekly oral discussions amongst peers with the written work of educational researchers. In this way, the language of the published authority can be interpreted, tested, and challenged in safety; and faculty feel freer to bring up what they have done in their courses, both the successes and the failures, to support or refute what that authority has written. The premises upon which such a forum is designed should include the acceptance of openly aired disagreements and perhaps conflict between practitioners. For, if we try to teach our students that questioning and challenging assumptions is important, then shouldn't we also considerately question each other's? Isn't conflict, when it is open, rather than hidden under the surface, the means by which we gain knowledge and eventually some consensus?

New Teacher Approaches A Mentor

When I first arrived to teach at Massachusetts Bay, I spent most of my preparation time revising the assigned textbook into lectures filled with simpler words, creating beautifully clear "models" to demonstrate concepts, and punctuating my presentations with real-world examples from my experiences as a retailer and manager. I remember those few fifty-minute sessions when I felt I had them in the palm of my hand; the room had been filled with rapt stares, denoting what I thought was wonder and the result of my brilliance as a lecturer--the light bulb of new insights turning on. We have all had those experiences as teachers. Those are the moments that motivate us to continue in the profession, making up for the more common frustrations. What happens more often than we care to admit is that after working so hard to explain some particularly difficult

theory or concept, students' questions prove that our wonderful explanations have been totally misunderstood. (Of course, that happens only if we allow for questions at all!) What is even more disheartening is when such "irrelevant" questions come too late--after the test.

As a novice, I sought help from only one or two of my more experienced colleagues. Perhaps I should not stray, even a tiny bit, from the textbook, considering the fact that students do not seem disciplined enough to read it on their own. More examples using drugs, sex, or rock and roll might help. Some other ideas were to try overheads, more handouts, humor when attention lags, or videos on a concept or chapter. I even enrolled in some of my colleagues' classes, hoping to pick up some pointers and approaches I could adapt to my own classes. I was struck with all the learning available there and could not understand why more of their students, surrounding me in those classrooms, could not get as excited as I did when I grasped some new idea or conquered a complicated problem.

Unfortunately, one very prevalent comment I heard from too many of my peers was that the students in college classrooms had drastically changed: "They just don't know how to think conceptually any more."

I accepted this last idea from other faculty primarily because they had spent many years teaching at the community college level and had seen thousands of students pass through their classes, while I had not. And it is true that today's community college students are not exactly like those who entered in the 1960s and 1970s. Open enrollment policies, the demise of the traditional family, the pervasive influence of television and the drug culture, and the inability of our K-12 system to adapt, have certainly changed things. But something still bothered me about simply accepting that the students had changed and that there was so little I could do about it.

Yes, it was true that my students seemed to *expect* that I would paraphrase the text, relieving them of any reading responsibilities. I was swallowing the idea, though not exactly whole, that I would have to produce an exciting oral presentation of text that they would not, or could not, read themselves. And yes, I had also been forgetting that most of them lacked the in-depth working experience (as well as any real proficiency in accounting, finance, and economic principles) that might be necessary to relate to my examples from the business world. So, I devised examples for problem-solving that only required the generic background of either being a teenager or an entry level part-time clerk on his way to nowhere.

When Doubt Sets In

And so it continued during my first four years. I kept going back to the drawing board, eager for a while to improve my students' understanding and retention of principles and theories, primarily by using charismatic one-way communication. Yet, my approach seemed incomplete; it was satisfying neither me nor the students. I was still getting "irrelevant" questions, posed too late and after the test.

Of course it should have dawned on me sooner: based upon my own four years of undergraduate experiences and after all the excellent lectures I had heard, after all the notes I had taken and memorized for tests, I remembered few "facts" and even fewer moments of revelation. So why did I expect that they should retain what I was *giving* to them if I could not retain what had been *given* to me?

I could teach my subject area to others primarily because I had expertise, gained through active practice in the school of hard knocks and through reading in my field. I had also developed platform skills with which to communicate in the language of my discipline. How did that happen? Well, it certainly was not because I had passed tests based upon lots of terms and their definitions, as spelled out for me by other experts in front of blackboards.

I had become management-literate by working and talking with others in business, many of whom had disagreed with me and therefore taught me much. From several I learned how to manage well and also how ***not*** to manage. I became something of an expert by *experiencing* the content I was now trying to teach, in order to develop my own ideas and support my own opinions. I was beginning to see that somehow I had to get students to take a more active role during class time. Lectures alone would not enable them to solve problems they would face in the real world of business and to make rational decisions based upon some content-focused guidelines.

College had taught me how to synthesize large amounts of information and how to think critically about some of it so that I could formulate an educated position on a topic of interest. What I internalized was a genuine love of learning and some processes that I use automatically, to question or to research. So, it stood to reason that I did not have to cover all the material facts and that I did not have to have all the answers. I did not have to be perceived as the singular authority, holding all the information necessary to know for participation in the community of the educated, making deposits of knowledge into students' accounts (Trimbur, 1985). Those accounts would be embezzled soon enough anyway.

My definition of the "good" teacher had changed. I would invite my students to be active co-investigators of my field. ***Basic*** assumptions and principles would become the only facts to know. With these principles, students and I, as a facilitator and an equal learner, would be guided through "a fluid process of observation and interpretation, of consensus and dissent, conducted within a far-flung community of seekers who agree upon certain assumptions, rules, procedures--many of which are themselves up for debate" (Palmer, p. 12). This all sounds pretty lofty, even now; and I knew, around 1987 or so, that although this new philosophy felt more comfortable, implementing it was going to be a game of trial and error. I knew of no peers who openly shared this viewpoint.

In Isolation, Teacher Spins Wheels

At first, I experimented with more written homework assignments. The results were not encouraging. Students were so perfunctory, so uncaring and uninvolved with the process of turning out analytical answers. Why didn't they answer ***the*** question, complete a thought, express themselves clearly? Were my colleagues right about the impervious extent of their disabilities? Should they be learning to do this in their English classes?

Alone, or by using one trusted colleague only as my sounding board, I could not answer those questions. I gave up on written homework for a while (even though I believed that writing at least got them actively engaged with the material, beyond class time) and switched to in-class small group work for my management students. Again, either the silence was deafening or the chatter amongst group members was irrelevant to the assigned problem.

With no kindred souls to talk to, I kept making changes; and when something did not work well enough to be called the result of "good" teaching, I made another change. All this haphazard experimenting was getting me nowhere. Worse still, I was becoming isolated. I was silent about my concerns, like those students who believe they are not sophisticated enough to participate in any academic or content-specific conversation. And there was no institutional setting where I could be listened to with empathy or "heard into speech" (Palmer, p. 15). Unfortunately, neither division nor faculty meetings were conducive to meaningful or lengthy discussion of teaching concerns.

As a novice, the youngest and one of only two women in the Management Department, I felt somewhat marginal and dependent upon the more senior faculty to legitimize my own teaching approaches. Since I had little tolerance then for ambiguity and was not comfortable enough to air my differences in public, I withdrew even further. There seemed to be general agreement that an

excellent lecture, during which the teacher does most of the thinking, was the source of learning in an introductory course. This is not to imply a universal disregard for experiential learning; I did hear about faculty experimenting with computerized applications to certain courses. But if there were others who were trying to innovate in their classrooms, I was unaware of it.

Thanks to my haphazard approach, my ideas about what might work better in my classroom were not well defined, so clearly describing them became increasingly difficult. Since I was not informed by the literature at that point in time, I had no backlog of references, no repertoire of other-opinions to pull out in critique of any well-intended suggestions. I needed colleagues who wanted to hear about my trial-and-error attempts and share their similar experiences--people I could trust who were as frustrated as I with traditional pedagogy. In 1988 I found it.

Teachers Need Forums Without Authority

The Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines (CLAD) committee at Massachusetts Bay became my safe setting. Through CLAD I have gained the support of teachers, representing a variety of subject areas, that I need to sustain my enthusiasm for teaching. We get together regularly to talk about the literature--on writing across the curriculum models that have succeeded or failed elsewhere, on reading, speaking, and writing skills as they relate to thinking abilities in any discipline, or on definitions of collaboration. When the discussions turn to potential applications to the classroom, I am an active learner, "joining new communities and taking part in new conversations" (Trimbur, 1989, p. 605) that are truly energizing. Our discussions provoke all kinds of disagreements; but since no one authority figure designs the structure for our talks, CLAD invites contradictions, thereby giving participants the courage to expose ignorance as well as insight, conflict as well as assent.

Massachusetts Bay offers many avenues for professional development, such as trips to conferences or participation in on-campus workshops conducted by well-known experts. All of these can expose faculty to new pedagogic possibilities; but they do not do what I am proposing must be done for teachers who want to share with their own ***local*** communities and who want to learn from other disciplines and from very divergent viewpoints, through truly open dialogue. Conference participants do not deal with Massachusetts Bay's student body. Also, most conference formats prohibit in-depth discussions (about teaching methodologies) with teachers from other campuses. On-campus workshops, while focused on the

real needs of faculty at Massachusetts Bay, are selectively attended by small numbers of teachers who already strongly agree with each other on the workshop topic. Not much controversy exists from the outset because the silent faculty I wish would attend do not get involved.

My own practice has surely been informed by participation in CLAD, but too many others, with whom I share the same body of students who have serious inabilities to think critically and express themselves, prefer to stand in the wings. I want to feel legitimate and comfortable enough to question others who do not have the conflicts I do or who do not feel the need for change. I want to know about their successes and why they think they have had them. I want to be able to hear their arguments and pose other viewpoints for their consideration. I want to be able to talk about my failures and to hear about theirs.

The Need For Sustaining Disagreement

Critical thinking espouses the value of disagreement and of getting different viewpoints out into the open for discussion. And while CLAD's discussion format allows for this to happen, conflict exists around this group's composition and it is not openly expressed. As a result, the group lacks the diversity in membership necessary for the discourse to continue and grow. For one thing, few could be called "senior" faculty. Only six regular participants come from content areas. The rest of CLAD is comprised of reading, writing, and English composition specialists. A group without diversity, comprised of people who are focused on what looks to others to be one separate compartment of knowledge, could be leading to privatization. We now often ask why our invitations to participate are ignored by faculty from diverse disciplines. The *perceived* authority of the group itself could be alienating. This may well cause feelings of powerlessness among the same experts we need to keep the conversation and search for meaning alive.

The problem of overcoming peoples' reluctance to participate, regardless of the rationale behind those fears, is one that institutions must take the time to ponder and solve. None of the mechanisms for getting faculty together will lead to successful critique of our own teaching practices unless those forums are somehow designed to invite dissenters. They should be faculty-driven and not designed by authoritative mandate, but getting ***all*** faculty to buy in will take time. Unfortunately, while groups like CLAD patiently extend invitations, exhaustion may set in, or administrators may tire of waiting for new recruits and cut the supporting threads too soon.

If college administrators can understand that faculty are silent a) because the dialogue may be about what is scary to them, and b) because they suspect their stories might be denied, then they will be more inclined to sustain such forums. Just as letting go of the need to deposit knowledge into students' notebooks is unsettling for a teacher, so too is getting faculty to talk about failed attempts to make changes. Openly-aired dissent may not be comfortable for participants nor totally appreciated by the academy.

Certainly for a novice teacher, there are benefits to be gained from forums that encourage faculty-driven searches for conflicting truths about what "good teaching" is. Although such forums can be slow to develop and slow to handle conflict, they must be sustained. I hope my personal experience has made this clear.

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Developing a Passion(?) for Writing Accounting!

Philippe L. Joyal
Assistant Professor of Management

"Writing to learn" is a teaching approach that I have become nearly obsessed with since I first tried it in some of my accounting classes. I first saw it as a novel idea that might be fun to play with, but never seriously considered it for adoption as part of any of my accounting courses. However, this new concept has created nagging questions which in turn have raised my anxiety level about teaching issues to a new high. Among the most troublesome is my commitment to changing my attitudes--about learning techniques, about teaching methods, about preparing additional material for class, about volunteering more clock hours to read and prepare responses to students' written assigned work, and finally about designing an assessment tool to evaluate this process.

Why do I want to get involved in all this? Why do I think that it will make a difference? How can I make it make a difference? What if the students in the classes in which I use "writing to learn" should learn the least amount of accounting during the semester--if results of a common exam for Accounting 101 were to prove such a fact? Will the pressure from my peers get to me after a while (pressure around time and energy expended on a project without compensation or other recognition)? Is all this "writing to learn" just another new-fangled exercise that comes around every three to five years?

Although brief, the experience with using writing in my class as a supplement to learning accounting does convince me that students will benefit from a more serious commitment on my part and more finely-tuned teaching techniques. Students will benefit to the extent to which I am willing to change my attitudes about teaching.

A participant in our CLAD (Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines) summer workshop recently wondered how we can expect our students to write about anything for which they feel no passion. Perhaps my answer to that question lies in my own willingness to help students develop a passion (too strong a word?) for "writing to learn." The passion for a "topic" about which to write will evolve. I must be the first to feel this increased enthusiasm for writing before I can even begin to arouse any curiosity about its value in any of my students.

My feeble attempts to use writing as a teaching tool in accounting classes last year provided preliminary but convincing evidence that students do indeed enjoy writing when properly motivated and encouraged. Several examples come to mind:

1. One student wrote only three lines during five minutes of assigned in-class writing. I returned the paper to her the next day and asked her to write a couple of paragraphs at her leisure at home. Without resistance to the extra assignment, she returned one and a half pages on the topic--and very well done as to both content and mechanics. There was no question in my mind about the fact that she enjoyed doing the writing and was proud of her accomplishment.

2. Another student wrote that the type of writing he enjoyed the most was when he was asked to write to a younger sibling explaining some accounting term or concept. He stated that the exercise helped him clarify the topic in his own mind.

3. Last semester, two students from my second semester accounting class, who had been in my accounting class the previous semester where I used writing as a teaching tool, expressed disappointment that I had chosen not to use writing the second semester with them. They stated that writing in class had been of noticeable help to them in learning accounting.

The workshop I attended this summer helped me sort out and evaluate the process I used last year. I was troubled with the thought that the informal writing that I had employed should somehow translate to formal writing--eventually. Yet, there was no way I would be willing take additional time from accounting to teach or even talk about writing techniques necessary for successful formal writing. Here, finally, was the dilemma: should I continue with informal writing or should I chuck the whole concept as unworkable in an accounting class?

I eventually concluded and now strongly believe that informal writing is a valid tool for learning. My syllabus will include writing as a class requirement and the quantity produced will be used along with attendance, homework, and quizzes to represent a percentage of the total semester grade.

I am going to leave formal writing to the English and writing specialists! Informal writing worked for me last year, and I suspect that with renewed enthusiasm it will work even more effectively for me next year.

An Experiment in Right Writing

Jennifer Hicks
Assistant Professor, Basic Disciplines

Each academic discipline has a writing style peculiar to itself. Each has its own conventions, rules, formats, and language. Writers in the humanities document using MLA; medical professionals use APA. Business students discuss Maslow's hierarchical labels and engineers precede reports with significant findings. Which way is right? How can right writing be taught? Are structure and conventions the most important aspects?

Rather than teach students a generic form of writing (or a traditional form of writing--place the thesis in the first paragraph of a five-paragraph essay and use topic sentences), I thought it might be more helpful to have students begin to understand the qualities of writing in their own fields. The premise was that if the students consciously researched the writing in their own disciplines, they would begin to learn about writing in their fields--the expected language, content and forms--and apply that in their own writing. By approaching the teaching of writing in this way, I made two assumptions. I assumed that students would write better if they were interested in something and that students chose their major fields of study based on personal interests.

The "Good Writing" Assignment

The initial assignment of the students in ENG 100, a developmental academic writing course, was to explore the question of what constituted good academic writing. Prior to drafting their papers, students each read all of several professional articles from a variety of disciplines: nursing, humanities, chemistry, and business. None of the articles particularly dealt with the idea of writing. They also read some student essays. Then as a class we discussed the similarities among the articles. Almost unanimously the class the decided that all the professional articles were well-written and most of the student essays were not. But when I asked the students what they meant by "well-written," I received a variety of answers: organized, to the point, correct, good, clear, no spelling errors, etc. In other words, the consensus was that the professional writing was good (after all it was ***published***), but no one appeared to know exactly what made it good. Conversely, they also determined that students' writing was not good because it contained errors, but they could not explain why the errors made the

papers bad. So, in essence, the students did not particularly learn anything from looking at their concept of the similarities among the papers.

However, when we began to view differences in the writings, interesting things began to happen. There were students who said, "I don't get what he means" about a certain article and others who said, about the same article, "Oh, yeah, we talked about that in our other class." Then there were questions like "How come the paragraphs are numbered in this one and not in the others?" or "Why didn't she come out and say what she meant in the beginning?" or "Why are all these abbreviations in here without explanation?" And there were comments like: "I really agree with what this person is saying. I've thought like that, too."

These questions and comments helped the class begin to see that the authors of each article (and perhaps authors of any writing, including error-ridden student writing) were making certain assumptions about their readers' knowledge. This helped the students see that the concept of audience really was important and was not just an English teacher's quirkiness. But they wanted to know how they were supposed to know which instructor wanted what and why. And they wanted to know what in writing was important. Was it handwriting? Neat typing? Organized paragraphs? Ideas? Language? Their questions led to the focus of their papers.

First Drafts

The drafts came in. All students, from my best to worst writers, were able to write coherent, purposeful papers that were focused on good writing. All were able to provide support for the points they made. Most used language appropriate to their disciplines. Some papers were still plagued with mechanical problems--fragments, run-ons, spelling errors, lack of noun/pronoun agreement. But a good portion of those problems were eliminated through peer critique or the spell-check on the word processor or by the student reading her paper aloud.

What was lacking in many papers though was an in-depth analysis of the qualities of writing in any of the fields. Most first drafts focused on the need for correctness in writing. In other words, the ideas were simplistic and obvious. Nothing was analyzed. For example, a typical sentence in the papers read: "I think good writing should be neat, grammatically correct, well organized, descriptive, and have no spelling errors."

Faculty and Student Discussion

For a while, I wondered why the students were unable to analyze, unable to look into the meaning of the writing, and I decided that perhaps I just had not been clear in my assignment. In an effort to improve the papers, I thought it might be helpful to give the students an opportunity to ask questions of people in their fields.

Faculty from nursing, business, early childhood education, and critical thinking came to the class ready and willing to answer students' questions about writing.

After introducing the "panel of experts," I asked students to go ahead and ask their questions. The first, rather obviously, was "What is good writing?" There were five faculty members and five different answers. Although all eventually agreed that good writing is clear and concise, the first answer was "It depends--it depends on the audience I'm writing for, why I'm writing it, and what I have to say. If what you write for me makes me think, then I'd say that's good writing."

For fifty minutes, questions flowed and faculty as well as students thought hard about what "good" writing actually entailed. We learned about nursing SOAP notes, business memos, educational observations. Very clearly, different formats of writing for different fields emerged. The underlying thread, however, was that the author needed to convey a thought--a real thought--and not merely regurgitate what she had read or heard.

At the end, it started to make sense to the students to use business jargon only if business people familiar with the terms were reading the paper. It started to make sense to include background information if the readers might not have been exposed to a certain idea before. And now it started to make sense to use standard American English if a student were writing to the average college teacher, because maybe the teacher would expect standard English and maybe he would not understand something else. In other words, the students were learning that the readers' expectations had to be considered.

Getting Down to Revising

When the students began to understand that not all disciplines use the same type of writing, they began to get interested. They started looking at different organizational patterns, formats, and uses of language and realized that certain fields of study had certain ways of doing things. More importantly though, they began to see past surface differences. Or, as the student mentioned earlier now wrote:

> After reading the paper on racism I began to think. I previously said that 'I think good writing should be neat, grammatically correct, well organized, descriptive, and have no spelling errors.' How could I say the paper on racism was good when there were spelling errors, words misused, and no capitals when needed? I said the paper was good because I learned something from the content of the paper. I realized that the content of what you are reading is just as important as how you write. If you get the point across, by including your thoughts, opinions, facts, and by learning from what you are reading, than [sic] that also helps to make a good paper.

And this student's observation of the difference between structure and content pervaded the class. Another student wrote:

> Thinking clearly, the understanding that goes with it, and the ability to put these ideas into a concrete form are brutally necessary. In the modernizing professional world we are moving into in the coming decades todays [sic] student will need a high level of preparedness to be competitive....Academic writing is the science of receiving information and applying ones [sic] own ideas to it to create a finished product that never before existed. The idea then must be imparted to others in a fashion they understand....Academic writing is not the study of how to write a good paper. It provides us with the opportunity to approach schooling in terms of a clear exchange and understanding of information in class....We know that a quality academic essay contains such elements as a clear purpose; it must be organized, it must address its audience, with correct grammar, and not bore the reader to rages of tears. The key to academic writing is the understanding that comes with it. The communication skills, conveying ideas to others so that they may clearly understand ones [sic] contentions [sic] comes through the practice of academic writing....Conveying ones [sic] interpretations on a subject matter to another so they understand ones [sic] position, being able to engage in a meaningful group discussion to arrive at new conclusions through intellectual interaction, are both trainable skills that can be improved through academic writing.

Conclusion

Apparently, if the students in this class are typical (and three semesters have shown that they are), it seems that given the chance to question and become involved in real "research," the students start to realize that all the writing they read was written for a purpose, all was written with a point to be made, and all

authors used explanations, illustrations, examples or details to clarify their ideas. I was impressed. The students now had a clear understanding of what good (or 'right') writing is. They had even analyzed writing and come up with a list of some qualities essential to good writing. But beyond that, they were able to synthesize this knowledge about right writing and apply it as they saw fit. All the papers I read contained thought--real thought and real application of the rules of grammar that we never once discussed, because now there was a need. There were individual ideas to convey to others.

Charting a 'Course' in the ESL Classroom

Elaine Wilson
Assistant Professor, ESL

Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore?

(Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*)

The Challenge

Communication in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom is rarely simple: each student brings to the learning situation different beliefs and expectations regarding the question of how one communicates well, both in writing and in speech, and students also differ with regard to learning style. For the ESL teacher, the problem of how to encourage and develop effective communication is further confounded by the nature of each student's culturally idiosyncratic notion of logic. Because the ESL teacher is constantly faced with such diversity, pedagogical experimentation is an absolute necessity.

At the same time, the cornerstone of effective communication rests upon a set of cultural norms and expectations. Speakers of English expect other English speakers to communicate in ways with which they are familiar. How can the ESL teacher encourage logical thinking and presentation that conforms to rhetorical norms without inhibiting the students' earnest attempts to become independent thinkers? In promoting at least nominal conformity to prescribed standards of speech and writing, can the ESL teacher avoid casting students upon the "slavish shores" of conformity? These are the challenges that this paper addresses.

In the 1960s, Robert Kaplan tried to explain why many intelligent ESL students have difficulty writing papers that make sense to us. He proposed that each language has a distinct way of organizing its rhetorical thought patterns. While the English paragraph may follow a linear pattern of development, the Asian pattern of development may be circular, arriving at the main point at the essay's conclusion. Semitic languages, according to Kaplan, follow a parallel pattern of development, while thought patterns in Russian and Romance languages are often interrupted by complex digressions.

Kaplan's theory in its most extreme interpretation has been criticized for representing too simplistic a view of the linguistic reality. Yet students of different cultures do employ varying patterns of logic in their written English--even if these patterns lack the clear-cut distinctions Kaplan proposed. More than a few Japanese ESL students will "spend" their whole paper leading up to the main point, which appears in the final paragraph. Often Hispanic students furnish the reader with a great abundance of detail and in-depth explanation before moving on to the next point.

Other educators and theorists also give credence to this notion of culturally distinct patterns of logic and extend it to the realm of learning styles. For instance, Diana Lam, the Superintendent of Schools in Chelsea, Massachusetts, recently suggested that in its dealings with ESL students, the public school system tends to teach to the strengths of the Asian students and to the weaknesses of the Hispanic students. When asked to explain, Lam replied that the majority of Asian students are more accustomed to memory-oriented, formulaic tasks, while the Hispanic students do better with a hands-on approach, in which a newly presented concept can be examined and discussed in a group setting.

If, in a mixed group of students from culturally diverse backgrounds, there is not only an abundance of learning styles, but also a different understanding of the best way to make a point in writing, how does the ESL teacher ensure that students are learning the techniques of effective communication? And here I repeat my initial question: how can I do this without imposing on the students formulaic techniques for churning out generic five-paragraph essays?

Stimulated by my participation in the CLAD (Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines) group at Massachusetts Bay, I have adapted two techniques for dealing with the challenges of diverse learning styles and distinct notions of logic in the ESL classroom. The first utilizes a combination of modified modeling and collaborative learning/peer group review; such a combination benefits both those students who work well with patterns as well as those who flourish in a group discussion situation. The second involves student-teacher conferencing.

Peer Review

First, I choose a representative sampling of student essays, at least one of which is fairly well written with no major flaws in organization or logic; all other writing samples exhibit a major flaw in reasoning or some divergence from the

natural pattern of argument in English. I try to choose papers which also contain praiseworthy features, e.g., accurate and complete definition of concept, effective use of comparison, etc.

The student authors read their essays aloud while their classmates follow along with a printed copy. Each student, including the student author, fills out a peer review sheet which asks a variety of questions about the piece of writing. Such questions may include the following:

1. Does the essay answer the question? If not, what question does it answer?
2. What is the main point of this essay?
3. Does the author give sufficient and relevant evidence to prove his point?
4. What is your opinion of the conclusion?
5. What are the strong points of this essay?
6. What parts of the essay, if any, are difficult to understand?
7. What suggestions can you make to improve this essay?

The questions on the peer review sheet are intended to guide the student in a general way through the rhetorical pattern of a standard argument in written English--presentation of main point, development, conclusion. After the students have completed the sheet on their own, they meet in groups and compare their answers, preparing a final comprehensive group peer review form. The groups then report to the class, and we discuss how the essay has or has not followed the pattern of a standard English argument. The main discussion which goes on in the groups pertains to meaning or communication of ideas. At times we agree that divergence from a standard pattern is appropriate and even essential to the success of an essay, as long as meaning is preserved.

When the student authors clearly understand that others have misunderstood or failed to grasp their various points, they are usually quite motivated to revise their essays to achieve greater clarity. The group discussions are quite animated and full of high spirits, perhaps because the students are in the role of the teacher. Student authors generally seem to appreciate and value the opinions of their peers, accepting their suggestions with grace and good humor.

Such an exercise is particularly useful in the ESL class for two reasons. First, it presents and helps the students to discover patterns (or the lack of them) within an essay. This is beneficial to all students whose native rhetorical patterns differ significantly from English, particularly those who are accustomed to structured learning patterns. Second, it generates an active and lively group discussion, benefitting those students who have a need to discuss an issue from every angle in order to fully understand it. One logical extension of this exercise

is to use it with pairs of students who work together outside the classroom on a written project, preparing mandatory peer review forms on each other's work. In such a case all students receive a grade both on their own essays and on the peer review forms they have filled out for their partners.

Conferencing

A second major technique that I use with ESL students involves conferencing, in which I act as an oral "peer" reviewer of the students' work. In individual conferences, I question the students about the essay, again taking them through the standard pattern of an argument, but this time in spoken English. I have the students put the paper aside, and I question them regarding their main point. Why do they think the way they do? Can they give me any examples which prove their point? I require that they rethink their argument aloud and present it to me orally. In employing such a methodology, I believe I am helping students to learn not only the grammar of English, but also its culture.

In "Dracula, the Vampire Lestat, and TESOL," James Gee supports the concept of teaching as being, at least in part, a form of acculturation. He states, "Languages are not bodies of conscious knowledge; they are not products of conscious learning...the language teacher is a master not just of a language, but of a culture...and students must apprentice themselves to that mastery. Either the master shows the apprentice the world, the form of life, the culture, by mutually 'doing English' with him, or the apprentice never grows up (in that language/culture)" (1988, p. 219). Indeed all teachers are in some sense masters of their own discipline's culture, be it physics, accounting, nursing, or computer science, and as such, teach their students not only the factual information of the discipline, but also the appropriate ways to speak and write within this world. As educators we are also cultivators, tilling an unknown soil, nurturing and encouraging the full growth of our students' potential. The two techniques I use help students to acculturate and communicate effectively without dictating to them or asking them to abandon their individuality.

If I require deep and earnest thinking of my ESL students, I must require it also of myself. While the well-travelled shore brings a certain comfort, it also limits my possibilities, and therefore those of my students. Peer review and conferencing are only two techniques which allow us to become explorers in the realm of language use and meaning. Further experimentation in methodology, further "intrepid effort" is required of the teacher of the '90s to address the needs of the student population we now serve.

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Collaborative Project Work and the ESL Lab

Glenn Gabbard
Associate Dean for Alternative Instruction
and Basic Disciplines

"Francamente, no puedo aguantar viajar como sardinas en lata." This phrase roughly translates to "Frankly, I can't stand to travel packed like sardines in a can" and is one that I remember trying to master in the dark, quiet of my high school language lab in my third year of Spanish. It has become a phrase which since then has served as a constant reminder of the questionable use of such language lab experiences in providing students with opportunities to use newly acquired language structures and vocabulary in meaningful, communicative contexts. Certainly, in that dark booth of the lab with headphones tightly wrapped around my temples, I was not about to do any traveling on any packed conveyances, as much as I would have liked. Even outside that booth, however, it was a phrase that epitomized the nearly useless structures taken from artificial dialogues which, when taken from their decontextualized language environments, assumed a surreal, near-absurd quality. Frankly, this particular phrase and many others jammed, sardine-like into my head by hours of constant and devoted repetition were not in any way useful once I hit the streets of Mexico City, Merida, or even Cancun.

When I gained fuller communicative command of my Spanish, and became an instructor of English as a second language (ESL) and basic writing, that particular phrase came back to remind me of the limitations of the "language lab" and of the audio-lingual theory which generally acts as its basis (Rivers, 1968). I can think of very little utility for the repetitious drill-and-practice which dominates language "lab" practice. Like so many of the behaviorist-oriented language teaching approaches in the past, language labs have worn out their usefulness. As Tom Garza (1986) has noted:

> The last twenty-five years of foreign language instruction in this country have witnessed the initial popularization and eventual "failure" of...the audio-based language laboratory. The listen and repeat sequences, the rote drill-and-practice, the electronic page-turners and animated flash cards all failed to exploit the potential of their respective medium (p. 39).

In my work as Director of the Learning Laboratory at Massachusetts Bay Community College (MBCC), I have experimented with the "lab" model and have

explored its potential for encouraging students to engage in more relevant, communicative use of their emerging language abilities. It seems clear that students learning English as a second language can benefit from experimenting with the language structures in a safe environment that encourages and fosters innovative, communicative use of structures new to them.

The purpose of this article is to describe the ways in which a language lab course can be used to foster the development of authentic, writer-based projects in an institution where new groups of students whose native language is other than English are just now being organized. I will demonstrate how the course helped two groups of students to collaborate on an orientation manual for incoming ESL students and how the process helped these students to become more fully integrated into the college community while developing their natural language abilities.

Background

Located in a relatively affluent suburb west of Boston, the college had a predominantly white, middle to upper class constituency until the mid-1980s. As enrollments of this traditional core subsided, increasing numbers of students from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds began to enroll. In 1981, there were only twenty-five students from other cultural backgrounds; today there are over 300, more than 10% of our total enrollment. Consequently, MBCC has only recently had to adapt its strategies for program development to students whose native language is other than English.

Problem

Although a number of specialized courses were designed to help special populations of ESL students, few of them encouraged the real, communicative uses of the language. Orientation programs held at the beginning of the year were very brief and introduced students to the bewildering array of problems inherent in attending an American college without supplying them with lasting strategies for addressing these issues.

The Learning and Thinking Strategies course, required of all entering freshmen and focused on critical literacy skills in an academic context, was inappropriate for students whose native language was other than English. The curriculum for this course was founded on assumptions about the needs of

underprepared American students and failed to accommodate the unique problems faced by international students and recent immigrants.

My colleagues and I began to see that many of our ESL students were becoming socially and academically isolated from the academic mainstream. Ironically, the very range of services provided to integrate them within the community furthered their social alienation.

A Structured Solution: Collaboration and Project Work

Two important influences in my own academic reading prompted me to try a small classroom research project that could help bring some of these ESL students back into the college community through active involvement in an authentic project. I had begun to read about the power of collaborative learning and the theoretical basis for its uses with disenfranchised students (Trimbur, 1985; Bruffee, 1984; Gere, 1987). I was also very interested in the uses of ethnographies and ethnographic study techniques that demonstrated the power of communities in determining their own uses and needs for literacy (Heath, 1983; Boggs, 1985).

My solution to the problems at MBCC was to set up two one-credit courses: a special section of the learning and thinking course and a lab course required as an adjunct to the ESL curriculum. Both courses required projects that would have to emerge from a collaborative process, and both courses had two sections (15-20 students enrolled per section).

Initially, students were asked to participate in a series of structured activities to familiarize themselves with the dynamics of collaboration. It is important to remember that there is a critical difference between group work and true collaboration. Groups can always be formed to work together on solving problems in informal settings. However, these groups often do not have clearly defined goals or limits. Collaborative groups work out of a dynamic of socially-defined control, consistently moving toward a goal that is collectively known and agreed on. Collaborative learners must take responsibility for the direction of their learning.

Once group members were comfortable working with each other, they began to develop organizational strategies for producing a project. I defined the overall task as the production of an orientation manual for (incoming) international students and each group decided how it would like to contribute. The learning/thinking group decided to conduct interviews with personnel in each of the college offices represented on the organizational chart.

Students in the lab group decided that they wished to conduct intensive group interviews among themselves and write these as a series of articles for the American readers of the project. Students formed themselves into smaller working groups, usually in teams of two to four, and conducted their interviews at various sites around the college. Some large group interviews were conducted when the subject was the culture of a student in the group. In this case, questions were prepared by all students, interviews were taped by one student, transcribed by another, and written into an essay by yet another. All writing was required to be done on the word processor. I taught students basic features of composing at the computer. The rest they learned through trial and error, some of it singly, at other times, collaboratively.

A peer tutor, herself an ESL student successfully completing regular academic courses, was available throughout the course to assist groups of students to get their work done.

An important feature of the project was the use of a dialogue journal as a way for students to record thoughts and develop their language abilities in a *safe*, non-judgmental environment. In long "letters" written to each other and to me, students and I discussed a range of questions and issues, from the project and their feelings about it to complaints about various parts of the college. The journal writings often became the basis for more formal group writing that was included in the project.

The merits of the dialogue journal have been more than adequately documented (Berthoff, 1978; Bartholomae and Petrosky, 1986). Perhaps the best testament to its effectiveness with this group of students is the writing of one student in the class, who considered the meaning of the journal to her:

> ....he (Glenn) explained about the journal which we handed to him every week. He said that we could write about anything we wanted and we could even draw some pictures in it. He didn't correct our writing at all, but wrote some comments in response to our writing and handed our journals to us without any red marks. I'm still wondering if he corrected every grammar mistake, how it would have affected writing? Has my writing improved or not through writing the journal? I'm not sure, but one thing that I'm sure of is that I learned what the writing is about from Glenn. He set me free from the constant fear of making mistakes and being corrected all the time. He let me be stupid in my journal...Oftentimes, I wrote about t.v. shows like "Late Night with David Letterman" and "Saturday Night Live" (Student journal entry, 1988).

The products of all the collaborative efforts through the semester were assembled at the end of the term. All written work was then edited by a group of four students who excelled in their language abilities and creativity throughout the term. Over the summer, these students edited all the writing, organized it, drew the illustrations, and then used the desktop publishing facilities at the college to produce the final copy. Again, through collaborative processes in which I intervened only peripherally, the writer-editors had to negotiate their differences on complicated aspects of grammar as well as logistical issues surrounding publication. These interactions were not always amicable and often demanded that students learn how to defend their stances on editing issues. One of the editors commented on her experience:

> Because we had different English backgrounds, we had many arguments about grammar. One said, "It is correct," but another said, "No! It is wrong." The rest of us were still confused and went to see Glenn and other staff to ask what the correct answer was. Therefore, we could learn English grammar correctly and learn different expressions. The most important thing for me at this point is that I learned how important it is to speak out. If I kept quiet, one of us would put his/her opinion, which was what I did not like. I noticed that my opinion would be ignored if I did not speak strongly (Student journal entry, 1988).

Benefits

The most obvious benefit of this project was the production of a highly polished orientation manual, which, because its authors had experienced many of the adjustment problems firsthand, became an important part of the orientation process at the college for incoming students.

There were clearly other benefits to the actual participants in the project as well. Studies have indicated a number of factors that must be addressed in working with underprepared students who are typically alienated from the authority which an institution represents.

Among other factors, underprepared students clearly need to strengthen their self-concepts; gain a better sense of control over the academic environment; become more attentive in class; build a support system; and own their learning processes (Noel, 1989). In short, underprepared learners need to become empowered to guide the course of their own academic progress according to their own goals and needs.

What I found through the redefinition of the language lab was that collaborative projects, such as the one I have described, go far in moving students

toward this improvement; in essence, they move themselves toward it. Many of the participants in the project continued on at the college and assumed various kinds of leadership positions; each of them became well-integrated into the community. Some of the students took on the leadership of the International Club, while others became tutors to other students at the college in their respective areas of expertise.

> I have changed very much. I used to feel isolation at school because I am a minority. Yet, now I do not feel this way anymore. I have confidence that I am good at something. I still have to learn how to express myself, but I am not the same person I was two years ago when I came here. I have become successful in school from studying but also from communication with classmates, faculty, and others. People make me feel very comfortable being at school. I was tutoring students, but in the class they helped me. This was very important for me and I appreciated it (Student journal entry, 1988).

The need for more authentic language-based activities in "lab" settings was clearly underlined by the success of this project. Rather than being isolated in non-communicative lab booths, idly repeating drill-and-practice exercises, students were engaged in a project that was based in their own natural motivation and inclination to become part of their new academic environment. Through their active involvement with various members of differing departments, each other, and the instructor of the course, students developed language that was useful and varied. More importantly, they acquired syntax, vocabulary, and semantic frameworks that reflected the shifting contexts in which this language was naturally appropriate and necessary. Students, then, were engaged in language use that recognized their connection with their immediate academic community: a powerful conversation that is very difficult to create in the typical language lab booth where "dialogue" is intended to happen in social isolation.

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A Little Light on Poetry from Hawthorne

Harold White
Professor of Humanities

In the spring of 1988, I became a participant in a group of faculty members at my college called the Task Force on Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines. The group had taken on the nickname of CLAD from the last four words in the title, and a good many cute jokes developed from the name ("we are equally good, clad or unclad"--the reader can make up any number of his or her own jokes). But the spirit of the group was indeed good, and an engaging sense of enthusiasm emanated from the meetings as various participants described their efforts to incorporate more writing exercises into their class sessions. These participants came from many different disciplines, yet each was finding that increased writing could invigorate the learning atmosphere in courses which the faculty member may have been teaching for years.

As a result of my involvement with this group, I began to think about the writing accomplished in my classes as consisting of two types: informal and formal writing--informal writing being that writing which is performed primarily for student learning and not to be graded, and formal writing being that writing performed primarily for student evaluation and to be graded. As I reflected upon my teaching of American Literature, it seemed to me that one of the most significant pieces of informal writing I had received in my past teaching was an unsolicited piece from a student several years ago. At the end of a final examination in American Literature that student wrote a short paragraph that went something like this:

> I really enjoyed the course. I particularly liked the short stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne. I was impressed by the way he used light and shadows and darkness in his stories. I am interested in photography, and his description of light and darkness seemed real to me and helped me see the places he was writing about.

When I read this I was both elated and dejected about what I had accomplished in the course. I was pleased that the student had significantly engaged the stories and taken something of his own from them. I was saddened by the thought that he had received no reinforcement concerning the validity of this particular observation, and that the other members of the class had not benefited from his insight. *I* certainly was helped by his writing; I never go through a class segment on Hawthorne without some reference to his point, and I

always acknowledge my source for this insight. But, clearly, the class in which that student participated would have been enriched had he made that point when the class was reading Hawthorne.

So I pondered how I could get that contribution from that student, and students like him, at the time that the insight is gained. And I came to believe that if I deliberately structured brief informal writing into the course, I was more likely to unearth a student's insights (as well as a student's misconceptions or misunderstandings) that may well improve the grasp of the material for that student and for the entire class.

The CLAD workshops and seminars encouraged faculty members to employ an increased amount of informal writing. I had resisted this procedure in the past for what I thought were perfectly good reasons. I felt that all writing submitted by students deserved a response from the instructor, and by response I meant a graded response. I felt that I required enough formal writing (although I would not have made a distinction between formal and informal), at least all I had time to grade, and any other kind of writing (informal, ungraded) would require time I did not have and would be writing of a less serious, less academic nature. But I was still disappointed that I could not figure out a way to foster and obtain student contributions like the one on Hawthorne's light and shadow.

My effort to think about the American Literature course under the influence of my CLAD involvement caused me to reexamine that portion of the course where language is used informally, that is, classroom discussion. I had always wanted students to explore their ideas, their responses to assigned material, their questions regarding lectures, by means of informal, ungraded language. But I had thought of that language as oral, not written. I now became interested in exploring whether or not some of that time I devoted to discussion (with various levels of success) I could profitably devote to informal writing. The presentations at the 1989 CLAD Summer Seminar by visiting practitioners of informal writing techniques indicated that writing periods of such brief duration as three to five minutes could be extremely valuable in eliciting student responses to material treated in lectures and reading assignments. I was also interested in seeing whether or not informal writing could replace short quizzes as a means of checking on student progress and provoking discussion. I wanted to learn ways to respond to student writing, other than grading it, which would be taken seriously by the student and be reasonable in terms of the time available to me for the teaching of a given course.

For the fall semester, therefore, I structured some informal writing into the American Literature course, particularly emphasizing the poetry segment of the syllabus--the segment where I usually experienced the least success. I was eager to

determine whether such writing would result in 1) an increased sense of involvement with the poetry on the part of the student, and 2) whether it would result in improved formal writing on poetry. By the end of the semester I had a pretty good answer to part one of my question, but I am still working on an answer to part two.

My stucture went like this: I required the students to keep a poetry notebook --hardly a radical idea, but for me it was at least somewhat radical. Although notebooks (or, more commonly, journals) had been in vogue for some time as instruments for improved learning, I had never used them in a course. My suspicion was that notebooks were too impressionistic, too casual, too personal, to achieve serious academic results. But by looking at the practices of my fellow CLAD members, I was able to fashion a use of notebooks that I was comfortable with.

I was more comfortable with the word "notebook," for one thing, because "journal" still seemed too personal for my purposes. I required entries in the notebook prior to every class session for which the reading of poetry was assigned. Thus I was asking for notebook entries on only nine of the forty-three days the class met. And I restricted the entries to questions or observations or insights, providing the students with a sheet of guidelines elaborating on each of these categories. Thus I wanted some evidence that the student had interacted with the poem, not merely brushed over it. I indicated that entries would not be judged as "correct" or "incorrect," but as "honest" or "dishonest." And I further indicated that the notebooks would constitute 10 percent of the course grade. I wanted the students to feel that the notebook was not a threat, but I did want them to take it seriously. I also informed them that I would deal with the question of "correct" writing about poetry in examinations and critical papers.

I collected the notebooks about six weeks through the semester as a spot check just to see that notebooks were being kept, and I collected them after twelve weeks when all the poetry assigned on the syllabus had been completed. I was impressed with the serious work many students did. I had kept the assigned material limited so that I could read all the students' entries. And I found the reading time reasonable even though each of my American Literature classes had about forty students.

But my biggest surprise came on the final day of classes. I had read, graded, and returned all the notebooks by that time. Student participation had been good, even very good, but I felt somewhat uncertain about the whole experiment. Since I had not used notebooks before, I did not know how to judge what the students had produced. I felt somewhat inept, as though I had laid a pretty heavy

burden on the students and then did not know how to use it, how to integrate it intelligently into the course.

So on that last day I distributed to them a questionnaire about the notebooks. I had never before devised such a questionnaire, and I am sure my final product left much to be desired. Primarily, I wanted to know what the students thought about keeping a poetry notebook, and I wanted them to tell me honestly. I wanted a form that required only a series of check marks so the students would be convinced of their anonymity. And I felt that the questionnaire had the potential to accomplish these limited objectives. As the reader will see in my copy of the questionnaire and its tabulated results at the end of this article, the students indicated only moderate improvement in their interest in poetry, but they indicated a marked enthusiasm for the role played by the notebook in their understanding of poetry.

I am convinced that including the notebooks as a clearly defined part of the course--a part of the course students ordinarily like the least--improved student attitude toward the course in general and toward that part of the course in particular. I now want to explore ways to build upon this discovery. I want to structure formal writing assignments based upon these informal notebooks. I want to discover how this informal writing can be employed to enable students to write formal papers, and to write them with clarity and confidence.

Thus one question answered leads to other, more complicated questions yet to be answered. Maybe if I keep at it, I will even figure out a way to include Hawthorne's fiction in the informal writing structure. I owe him that, at least, for teasing me into this effort. Funny business, this teaching.

Questionnaire on Poetry Notebooks

1. Please check the one following statement which most accurately describes your attitude toward poetry before you took this course:

   1. I was not interested in poetry. (15)
   2. I was somewhat interested in poetry. (41)
   3. I was seriously interested in poetry. (4)

2. Please check the one following statement which most accurately describes your attitude toward poetry now that you have completed this course:

   1. My attitude toward poetry has not changed. (7)
   2. My interest in poetry has increased somewhat. (39)
   3. My interest in poetry has increased considerably. (14)

3. Please check the one following statement which most accurately describes your attitude toward the poetry notebooks you were required to keep for this course:

1. Keeping a notebook did not help me in my understanding of poetry.	(3)
2. Keeping a notebook helped me somewhat in my understanding of poetry.	(18)
3. Keeping a notebook helped me considerably in my understanding of poetry.	(39)

(*The total number of responses reflects attendance on the final day of class in two sections of American Literature.*)

Classroom Coexistence: Written and Oral Communication

Cynthia Lawton
Assistant Professor of Humanities

As a teacher of both writing and oral communication classes, I have always endeavored to reinforce the similarities between these two modes of communication. It has been natural to point out to my composition students that many of the skills they were developing as writers, such as analyzing the audience, choosing an appropriate subject, refining that subject, developing it with specifics, and organizing it into a coherent whole, were comparable to those we use in oral speech. I urged oral proofreading of drafts of writing in order to hear the fluency of their language.

However, as a teacher also of basic oral communication classes, I found that I was paying scant attention to reinforcing writing skills as part of the syllabus. The thrust of such courses is to accent the development of skills of organization and presentation of ideas via oral delivery. The emphasis is on the use of the extemporaneous mode of delivery rather than that of memorization or reading from a manuscript. Students spoke from topic outlines rather than prepared themes in order to achieve a conversational style of delivery.

After attending several workshops and seminars dealing with the impact of writing across the curriculum and participating in the CLAD (Critical Literacy Across the Disciplines) group at the college, I decided to incorporate written critiques and analyses in these speech courses. The results have been positive both for my students and for me.

Wilson and Arnold tell us that:

> Style in speaking is that part of the art which emerges from choices and combinations in language, their grammatical construction, and their psychological impact. Some language decisions are made during stages of invention and disposition, but whole speeches almost never exist, even in the mind, until after the problems of language have been faced directly (Wilson and Arnold, 1968, p. 275).

Since developing the art of listening is an integral part of oral communication, the feedback gotten from students is especially important. While oral feedback is certainly valuable, the use of brief written assessments is superior. Having students write one-sentence or one-minute responses stating key concepts learned, or listing the clearest points and the least clear, is invaluable both for

student and teacher clarification. The posing of questions in writing is often less intimidating for the class than voicing them aloud. These questions can be quickly scanned by the instructor or speaker prior to the next class and addressed at that time.

Group dynamics are an important part of my oral communications classes, and group assessment using writing activities synthesizes principles and practice. Any of the above-mentioned activities can be done by small groups quite effectively. A group can also function as a 'round-robin' with each member adding one sentence to clarify key concepts learned or to critique a speech. A group or an individual can outline another student's speech as a result of notes taken during its delivery. This develops both organizational and critical thinking skills.

The use of self-analyses by students at the beginning and end of a speech course is also a valuable device to strengthen writing skills as well as to allow the instructor to assess how effectively he or she has met class needs and individual aspirations for improvement. Journal writing, a related tool now gaining in use at Massachusetts Bay, is particularly effective in any course that emphasizes oral communication. For example, in musical theater and stage production courses, participants write responses to and critiques of plays in production both at the college and in the community.

I stress the use of written outlines of speeches as well as discussion plans and debate briefs. Classroom debaters are required to document the development of their arguments and refutations in written form in order to justify a judging decision. This enhances the learning process both for the debate participants and the listening audience. Panel discussions also require the use of a written outline of the topics to be covered during the oral presentation. This not only serves to improve writing skills, but also aids in defining the problem, analyzing it, formulating solutions, and testing and evaluating them.

Perhaps one of the best uses of writing in speech classes is that of critiquing fellow speakers. Students tend to be very supportive of each other, and this is good in itself because it enhances the growth of self-confidence and serves to reduce speech anxiety. However, the reluctance to cite criticisms designed to aid speech improvement disappears once the students are asked to submit written critiques and analyses of fellow speakers. Since I promise them anonymity (after reading the critiques, I cut off the writers' names before returning them to the speaker), the students are able to be more honest and critical. The written comments produce more detailed and thoughtful analyses, which aids in improving overall performance.

Leading educators, such as Patricia Cross, Tom Angelo, and Susan Obler, to

name just a few, have been promulgating the use of writing across the curriculum in tandem with classroom assessment. Once tried, its value not only strengthens the student's learning, but also serves to enhance the instructor's effectiveness as a classroom teacher and researcher. Writing in speech classes has served to increase not only understanding and retention of the subject matter, but the ability to communicate that knowledge as well. As Aristotle said in the *Rhetoric,* "...each kind of rhetoric has its own APPROPRIATE STYLE....A knowledge of both the written and spoken style is required" (Cooper, 1932, p. 217).

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Confessions of a (Former) Remedial Lady

Susan Andrien
Coordinator, Writing Programs

There is a kind of tale that can only be told out of school. My grandmother used to tell this kind of story when she worked as a live-in cook for wealthy families in Pennsylvania and Delaware. At night, after the dishes were done, she would get together with the other cooks and domestic workers from the neighboring houses and they would tell stories about their employers, laughing until they cried for mercy. No matter who they were or who they worked for, the themes were the same: the employers knew nothing about how the house was ***really*** run, and they had little regard either for the invisible people who kept the households running or for the work they did.

For many years, working in writing centers and as a teacher of remedial English at private colleges, I was reminded of my grandmother's stories. Whenever I got together with other teachers who did this kind of work, we would tell the same kind of amused and scornful tales about our colleagues and administrators, all the academics for whom the work of teaching writing was invisible--something that should have been taken care of long before students got to the college writing class. Although these colleagues had little interest or experience in teaching writing, it seemed to us that they assumed that the job was mundane, obvious, and beneath their abilities, and tended to make hilariously authoritative pronouncements about how it ought to be done. Laughing with my fellow remedial ladies, I recognized the subversive note that comes from the habit of silently witnessing, saving the tale for later telling.

In our professional roles, we had listened without flinching while a colleague referred to a student who spoke three languages as "speaking only gibberish." We had nodded blandly when another colleague boasted of making students with learning disabilities copy misspelled words onto the blackboard in front of the class. We had kept our smiles frozen while an administrator explained with pride how his third-grade daughter could write better than his adult Haitian student. We had listened without objecting at meetings where our colleagues railed against the "garbage" who were now being admitted into college. We joked among ourselves about the messages we often received from faculty: "I sent this student to see you three weeks ago, and she still makes mistakes on her papers!" We all had our atrocity files of student papers with horrid teacher comments on them: to a student with dyslexia: "Your spelling is unforgiveable;" on a student's heartfelt best effort: "This insults my intelligence--and, presumably, yours." And yet we

rarely questioned these attitudes face to face; it was only later, among fellow remedial workers, that we told our tales.

Of course, there were good reasons why we felt unable to speak openly. Developmental teachers are seen as a kind of support staff at many academic institutions, a civilized answer to a disagreeable fact of life. Like domestic workers, they are a means to get the unsightly debris of the educational process out of sight; it is not their place to raise questions about the practices that prevail in mainstream classrooms. In the traditional model of higher education, remedial courses and programs have always been seen--when they are seen at all--as external to the real business of the college. And traditionally, that business has not concerned itself very seriously with making education accessible to people who do not already speak its language. It is no wonder that my colleagues and I felt like subversives. What goes on behind the closed doors of the writing center or remedial classroom challenges one of the basic premises that underlie higher education: the unspoken agreement not to look too deeply into the relationship between academic performance and privilege.

We remedial ladies had not started out as dissidents. Something interesting had happened to us while we worked with our institutions' rejects in forced isolation. We had learned to our surprise that students who start off writing badly often learn to write well--sometimes extremely well. We learned some good news: that a student's measured level of "ability" when she enters college does not necessarily predict what she is able to learn or achieve in college. But we also found out that a student who has not learned as a child to read and write in the way expected of educated Americans will probably never learn that language if she remains outside the context in which it is spoken, read, and written. This was bad news because the intention of our colleges--and the particular purpose of *our* jobs--was to keep those students away from the academic discourse community until they could speak, write, and read like members. And the problem became even more complicated because, to many of our colleagues outside the remedial room, these requisite abilities were regarded as evidence of personal merit, the least one could expect from a person asking to be initiated to the ranks of the educated.

Fortunately, this kind of upstairs/downstairs mentality cannot survive at a community college. Open admissions means that we accept everybody who cannot get past the butler at four-year schools. If we hide away all of the students who have not mastered writing before they get to us, our classrooms will be empty and the remedial closet very crowded. Furthermore, the diversity of our students' backgrounds prevents us from making the usual genteel distinctions between remedial and college-level students that prevail at schools with selective

admissions policies. Even our ESL students--the most easily identified group of outsiders--are too dissimilar to be packed off to the remedial lady. They include permanent residents of the United States who learned English as children, students with degrees from their native countries attempting English for the first time, students with a long history of failure at learning English, students so adept at learning language that they will be speaking English fluently in a few months, students who write nearly flawless English but cannot pronounce what they have written...the list is as long as the class roster. Students with learning disabilities, the other easily-identified group of non-traditional students, are similarly eclectic; our students do not necessarily fit the high-IQ-low-achievement profile characteristic of LD admissions criteria. The word for our student population is *a-sorted*—that is, it has not been sorted for us by admissions standards that very narrowly define the populations of most four-year schools.

For this reason, the limited remedial model developed at selective institutions is not very effective for open-enrollment schools. We cannot marginalize language and the other invisible abilities that students "should" have when they come to college. We need to do in all of our classes what the remedial lady has traditionally done for those few misfits--develop an instructional approach that accommodates our students' diverse levels and rates of learning. Research about language and learning--as well as common sense--suggest that this cannot just happen in a few introductory writing courses. And yet the idea of including writing, reading, and other language instruction as part of every discipline seems radical--even impractical. Haven't these abilities always been assumed of college students? According to David Russell's history of writing instruction in the modern university (1990), this set of assumptions amounts to a closed circle. American college faculty are able to maintain the illusion that language abilities are "generalized, transparent, a matter of prior instruction, aptitude, intelligence, or dedication" only because their institutions exclude--or fail--all those students "whose backgrounds make conscious, discipline-specific language instruction necessary" (p. 53). In Russell's analysis, teaching writing as a skill outside the regular curriculum is doomed to failure:

> Interdepartmental remedial programs assume that students must learn the linguistic forms of a community before becoming a part of it. But without being immersed in the discourse community they wish to be a part of, without listening, speaking, reading, and writing with others in it, students have great difficulty learning the conventions of the community....Faced with this hurdle, many--in some cases most--students do not enter a degree program or, once admitted, flunk (or drop) out because they are not taught (only expected to know) the conventions (p. 63).

In taking on the work of educating these excluded students, community colleges should be careful not to take on the compartmentalized view of language that excluded them in the first place. Yet writing may be even more isolated from the disciplines at two-year schools. A recent survey of community college writing programs reveals that only 27% have writing across the curriculum (WAC) initiatives, although 42% reported an interest in such programs on their campuses (Raines, 1990). There are many reasons why it is hard to get WAC and other professional outreach programs started at two-year schools--we are so teaching-oriented that meetings often seem a waste of precious time. But a more troubling reason for this scarcity may be found in attitudes like that expressed by two-year college spokesperson Elisabeth McPherson in her retrospective of community college writing programs (1990). McPherson dismisses WAC as a "fad," one in a string of politically-motivated trends including back-to-basics, behavioral objectives, and "excellence in education" (p. 144). In McPherson's experience, WAC "works better in universities than community colleges" because two-year college teachers in disciplines other than English are likely to see writing issues too simplistically, focusing exclusively on such surface features as spelling and punctuation rather than on the intricate language issues that affect learning in diverse linguistic communities. She supports this claim with an amusing and scornful anecdote about a well-meaning history teacher who, trying to pay more attention to language in his classroom, graded a student down because of punctuation errors. Even worse, the teacher was wrong; the student had punctuated the paper flawlessly. McPherson concludes, "I'm still not sure whether that teacher thought no Black student was capable of punctuating or whether he didn't understand punctuation himself...it became clear that junior-college teachers in most departments thought writing across the curriculum meant no more than lower grades for spelling errors" (p. 144).

Such tales are familiar--at least to me and my grandmother--but I am not so inclined to laugh complicitously these days. I am not sure why McPherson believes that university faculty are any better able to understand these issues than their community college counterparts. That has certainly not been my experience, but it is not the point I want to address here. What is interesting about her dismissal of WAC is that her larger argument supports the very concerns that fuel this movement: that all teaching has the goal of helping students learn to think more clearly, and that thinking, writing, and reading cannot be taught as isolated skills, separate from their practical, social, and political contexts. Community college faculty, she argues, need to develop our own ways of reconciling the rhetoric of excellence with the real needs of our students. And yet, when her

colleagues in the academic disciplines misinterpret the need for discipline-specific language instruction, she is willing to drop the argument altogether.

I think it is worth examining McPherson's easy acceptance of the conclusion that content faculty at community colleges are incapable of seeing the academic literacy movement as more complex than the need to correct errors. Like many remedial ladies, she may have fallen into a habit of believing that well-meaning composition teachers can fix this problem all by ourselves. The solution she proposes is to focus curricular reform on the development of better English courses, courses that immerse students in a meaningful context, help them find a voice for themselves, and encourage them to focus on ideas, not just on error. She writes that "a good English course should deliberately stir up preconceived ideas, delight in discussion and argument, demand that students defend their beliefs" (p. 146). True enough, but how can *any* teacher, in *any* classroom, work without the powerful tools of questioning and changing ideas through language? And can those of us who teach language abilities afford to ignore the contexts in which our students will be arguing, discussing, and defending? I suspect that when McPherson says that "teaching English is unavoidably a political undertaking" (pp. 146-147), she means, on some level, that it should be a *subversive* undertaking, using methods unrecognized or invalidated in the traditional classroom, and giving students a critical perspective on the way language is treated outside the English class. To draw the line there is to accept the role of outsider, one who does not own the house in which she is living and working.

Given the challenges that we face at this point in our history, I do not believe that remedial ladies can continue to take refuge in our habitual isolated role. We need to work on our campuses to promote understanding of how language can be learned and taught. This may mean that we need to tell our tale to everyone we work with, in all disciplines, and listen to their tales as well. Furthermore, we should get out of the habit of looking to our colleagues in four-year schools to solve this problem for us; by eliminating students with visible language needs from their classrooms, these institutions have perpetuated the conditions that obscured the need for "conscious, discipline-specific language instruction" in the first place. In short, they have kicked the problem downstairs to us. If the traditional view of the role of language in education is to be changed, diverse linguistic communities like ours will need to play an active role; "stir up preconceived ideas, delight in discussion and argument, demand that [colleagues] defend their beliefs." In other words, practice what we preach to our students and take the risk of speaking as knowledgeable members of our community.

If, on the other hand, we continue to function as isolated language experts, we play a passive part in keeping faculty in the classrooms from knowing about language and how it is learned. It takes years of close work with students--and here I speak from my own experience as a slow learner--to finally realize that correcting students' grammar really does not have any effect at all on their ability to use correct grammar in their writing. The subtleties of teaching language seem to be something that each teacher has to learn for herself. And if we remedial ladies have learned anything in our long records of service, it should be this: you cannot learn to be an expert when the authority is vested outside yourself. This is true for students learning language, and it is true for faculty learning to encourage language use in their classrooms. Like all discourses, that of language-teacher has to be acquired from within.

Clearly, we cannot help to effect change if we remain in our closets, writing and speaking only to people who already agree with us. And yet the task of altering traditional beliefs about language is daunting; after all, everything we have experienced outside the remedial room--including our own educations--seems to support the perception of language as a generalizable set of basic skills, easily acquired by people of normal intelligence before adolescence. In "Arguing About Literacy," Patricia Bizzell provides a useful perspective on what it means for a member of an academic culture to argue for radical change in the face of seemingly impossible historical circumstances. Advocates of reform cannot afford to be merely oppositional; they "must persuade other members of the academic community that the prevailing notion of academic literacy needs revision" (1988, p. 152). Further, she argues that such profound reform is impossible until those who see the need "are willing and able to engage in the rhetorical processes that make change happen." For many former remedial ladies like me, this means that our job is no longer to pull language, with all of its power and problems, out of the curriculum, but to work with our colleagues in all disciplines to put it back in.

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Andragogy, Self-directed Learning and Critical Thinking

James E. Wright
Associate Dean for Career/Technical Programs

Introduction

Although the word seems arcane, "andragogy" is a robust idea that lends itself well to the educational and training needs of our post-industrial information society. However, strong societal and cultural forces have blocked extensive adoption of andragogical principles in schools and workplaces. This article will take a different look at the adult education concept of andragogy by establishing a rationale for integrating the theories of the critical thinking movement with the notion of enlightened self-directed learning. Adult educators and proponents of the "critical thinking movement" are encouraged to join together and focus on enlightened self-directed learning and critical thinking as interdependent developmental goals for both individuals and groups. The hope is that by working together, reform in the classroom and the workplace can be hastened.

Background

In two early influential works, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education (1970) and The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1973), Malcolm Knowles accomplished two important things. First, he galvanized the many practitioners of adult education and provided a clear context for increased research, leadership and professionalism. In fact, Knowles is often referred to in the literature as the "Father of Modern Adult Education" in the United States. Second, his Americanization of the European concept of andragogy forced a hard look at traditional pedagogy and the role of the learner in the teaching-learning process. In Knowles' view, andragogy involved the learner in the process of setting learning objectives, directing instructional methods and evaluating the learning achieved. He viewed the conventional K-12 pedagogy as too teacher-centered, with content often unrelated to the actual needs and concerns of the learners.

The results of the first accomplishment are striking. Businesses and educational institutions of all types now treat lifelong learning as a self-evident

notion. Many educators, managers, trainers, human resource administrators, social workers, physicians and other professionals actively embrace adult learning principles in their work and consider themselves adult education practitioners. Masters degree and doctoral programs in adult and continuing education across the country have produced a significant body of important research and knowledge in a short period of time. In addition, practicing adult educators have published a substantial amount of writing in a wide variety of journals.

The results of Knowles' andragogy vs. pedagogy dialectic are much less outstanding. Although encouraging much discussion and debate, his vision of the self-directed learner remains an enigma in the formal classroom at most levels and in most environments. Andragogy, with its principles of student-centered and student-directed learning, lingers on the shelf of most managers, adult educators and trainers. The traditional classroom lecture method and facilitator-centered workshop/meeting format continue to dominate the teaching-learning process in most education and training settings.

Why Hasn't Andragogy Caught On?

Why does andragogy remain in the background of adult education and education in general? Most educators find it hard not to become enamored with the idea of andragogy. The principles of andragogy are as American as apple pie. Mutual setting of learning goals between teacher and student; shared decision making regarding instructional methodologies; active student participation and leadership in learning activities; and joint evaluation of learning outcomes all combine to form a powerful statement about the value of the individual. Further, as a process, it works to continually develop and reinforce freedom and self-direction. As with all democratic theory, we feel good about ourselves in the midst of the ideology.

However, in the real world, the concepts of majority rule, the greatest good for the greatest number and the sanctions of a free marketplace, combine with the needs, wants and rights of the individual to create a series of "group vs. individual" difficulties. If what you want is not what "they" want, democracy can be hard to swallow. And if your "self-direction" takes you too far from the mainstream or outside the law, the group (or society) will hold you in check (or in jail). And so the American experiment, the democratic demonstration project, although successful for the most part in its first 200 years, continues to be challenged.

An analogy between the larger society and educational environments, either schools or workplaces, is not completely pure. But it affords enough of a link to provide a context for comparison. The ideas of democracy fail in the classroom

for the same reasons they sometimes fail in the wider community. Further, while our relatively young American culture builds around the ideas of freedom and individuality, the more ancient cultures of school and workplace build around the idea of the superordinate role of teacher or manager and a mechanistic view of the individual. Democracy and school, or democracy and the workplace are, more often than not, at philosophical and pragmatic odds with one another.

As a learning approach, andragogy has much going for and against it. The idea of having a group of self-directed learners working with a skilled facilitator is a powerful one. However, human beings do not always measure up to their potential. In addition, the important social structures of school and the workplace embrace age-old cultures based upon views of the nature of man that oppose the assumptions of democratic theory.

From Andragogy to Self-Directed Learning

As a learning process, andragogy assumes self-direction within the learner and the acceptance of self-direction in the learning environment. Although fundamental to the concept of andragogy, these assumptions can be major obstacles to its implementation in the real world of education and training. Recognizing several conditions helps to provide a clearer context for viewing andragogy: many, if not most, people are not self-directed in their learning and many, if not most, learning environments are not accepting or encouraging of self-direction. These two conditions are interrelated because people cannot become self-directed in environments that do not accept that behavior, and environments that attempt to accept self-direction cannot function if the participants are not self-directed. Also, there are many situations in which self-direction among learners is neither possible nor practical.

At this point, it will be helpful to take two giant steps. One is to allow that there are numerous situations in which an andragogical approach is not appropriate. For instance, if a piece of new equipment comes into a fire station, the firefighters may not need to participate in a lengthy process of mutual goal setting, interactive instruction and shared evaluation to learn how to use it. They may simply need a demonstration and some practice. Recognizing that there is a time and a place for teacher-directed learning will eliminate a great deal of the opposition to andragogy. It will also help to accentuate those circumstances where self-directed learning groups are fitting.

The second helpful step is to stop using the term andragogy and replace it with the more readily understood phrase "self-directed learning." As a label,

andragogy has served its purpose of forcing a distinction between "adult" learning and traditional pedagogy. It now seems to be arcane, serving only as an impediment to fostering the development and acceptance of self-direction in learners. The androgogical process will flow naturally when self-directed learners gather, no matter what it is called. Furthermore, like most adult educators, this author is tired of having people scrunch up their faces in puzzlement when they first hear the word.

Enlightened Self-Directed Learning

Self-direction is a desirable trait, particularly in learning. Although self-direction is innate in most healthy human beings, it is developmental in nature. As an ability, it needs to be nurtured and practiced in an accepting environment or it will lay dormant. Self-directedness is the antithesis of the psychological condition of other-directedness. Self-direction in learning is self-perpetuating. The more self-directed people act, the more self-directed they become.

Nevertheless, self-direction needs to be tempered with the awareness that the individual and the group or society need to seek a harmony of needs. This will lead to an *enlightened* self-direction. The group or society must realize that self-directed individuals are of great value to the whole. And self-directed individuals must recognize that a strong and cohesive group is essential for healthy individualism.

As a society, one of our major goals should be the development of enlightened self-direction in learning. This should be true of parenting, schooling and the workplace. Being an adult should be defined as being a self-directed learner and a responsible community member. These two traits should not be viewed as a duality but should be recognized as being in dynamic interrelationship.

Critical Thinking Skills

During the past five years, the development of critical thinking skills has become an area of interest for educators at all levels. The conclusion that the future will demand higher levels of thinking and problem-solving skills among all workers has become widely accepted. Approaches range from the development of discrete lessons or courses in critical thinking and problem solving to attempts to infuse the practice of these skills in all curricular areas.

Of the many modern critical thinking paradigms, the most time-tested is that of Benjamin S. Bloom. Forty years ago the American Psychological Association met in Boston. A group of college and university test developers attending this convention expressed the need for a theoretical framework to facilitate communication among them. For the next eight years a group called "A Committee of College and University Examiners" met annually to address this need. The Committee was made up of Max D. Engelhart of the Chicago City Junior College, Edward J. Furst and Walker A. Hill of the University of Michigan, and David R. Krathwohl of Michigan State University. The group was chaired by Benjamin S. Bloom of the University of Chicago.

The work of the Committee resulted in a taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, et al., 1956). Beyond providing a context for interaction among test examiners, the taxonomy became the blueprint for curriculum developers. According to Bloom, et al., the taxonomy provides a classification of educational goals which defines three major domains according to their natural relationships. The cognitive domain consists of goals dealing with recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills. The affective domain includes goals that describe changes in interests, attitudes, and values and the formation of appreciations and adjustments. The psychomotor domain involves objectives that concern the manipulative or motor-skill area.

The cognitive domain, according to Bloom, et. al., entails a system of hierarchical skills, with the development of higher levels dependent upon the development of the lower levels. In order of sophistication, this hierarchy includes the skills of knowledge/comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Bloom refers to comprehension as the level of remembering facts and understanding basic definitions, concepts and relationships. The application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels of the hierarchy are described as the "intellectual skills" and are referred to by many today as "critical thinking skills." The following definitions are summarized from Bloom, et al., with examples added by this author.

Application skills involve the use of abstractions, such as general ideas, theories, rules or procedures, generalized methods, and technical principles, in particular and concrete situations. Examples include using indexes to find information, using the knowledge of the rules of a game to act as referee or umpire, or using theories of good nutrition for meal planning.

Analytical skills involve breaking an idea, theory or methodology into its elements or parts, making connections and interactions among these elements or parts, and recognizing the organization, systematic arrangement, or structure that holds it together. For example, understanding the economic theory of supply and

demand requires a knowledge of what it means to have a large or small supply of something, a conception of what consumer demand is, and the ability to see how variations in these elements affect the value or price of a good or service.

Synthesis skills are used to work with pieces, parts, elements, etc., to produce a unique whole, a plan, or a proposed set of operations and further to deduce propositions and relations from a set of basic propositions or symbols and to generate a set of abstract relations either to classify or explain particular data or phenomena. Examples include developing a plan for a small business given a set of economic circumstances or solving a murder mystery given a certain set of clues.

Evaluation skills are those used to make a judgment about the value of material and methods for given purposes, either in terms of internal evidence or in terms of external criteria. Internal evidence consists of logic and appraisal standards inherent in the situation. External criteria involve the use of self-developed appraisal standards or standards developed by others. Two examples are: studying the mores of a foreign society and judging the appropriateness of certain behavior (internal criteria), or evaluating a program of study using standards created by an accrediting board (external criteria).

Enlightened Self-Direction and Critical Thinking

It should be evident that there is an organic and synergistic relationship between the concept of enlightened self-directed learning and the concern for the development of critical thinking skills. The higher level intellectual or critical thinking skills require self-direction while at the same time nurturing and cultivating self-direction. Self-directed learning necessitates the use of critical thinking skills while at the same time nurturing and cultivating those skills.

Richard W. Paul, Director of the Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique at Sonoma State University, is recognized as a leader in the national and international critical thinking movement. In his introduction to the Ninth Annual and Seventh International Conference on Critical Thinking and Educational Reform, Paul states:

> People become educated...(when)...they learn to think for themselves: to gather, analyze, synthesize, and assess what is presented to them for belief. Education is not a mere piling up of more and more bits and pieces of information. It is a process of deciding for ourselves what to believe and do. It implies a self-motivated action upon our own thinking and a participation in the forming of our own character. It is a process in which we learn to

> open our mind, to correct and refine it, to enable it rationally to learn; thus to empower it to rule over its own knowledge, to gain command over its own faculties, to achieve flexibility, fairmindedness, and critical exactness.

The relationship between self-directed learning and critical thinking is organic and symbiotic. A self-directed learner is a critical thinker and a critical thinker is a self-directed learner. In effect, they are one and the same.

Adult educators and critical thinking reformers should join forces in the attempt to motivate teachers, trainers and managers to recognize that learning objectives, instructional methodologies, along with employee development systems, should reflect the use of self-directed critical thinking skills by both individuals and groups. All of these activities should compel people to think critically for themselves, for it is by doing this that thinking skills and self-directed attitudes are acquired and cultivated.

Summary

For adult educators, the andragogy vs. pedagogy debate should be replaced with a renewed call for an emphasis on enlightened self-directed learning by both individuals and groups through the active use of critical thinking objectives within all curricular areas. For critical thinking advocates, the adult education notion of enlightened self-directed learning should be embraced as a way to expand the importance and acceptance of generating critical thinking in society. In the workplace, the ideas of enlightened self-directed learning and critical thinking ought to be viewed as essential goals of employee development. A self-directed worker at any level, who appreciates the need for balancing the rights of the individual with the needs of the group, and who can think critically, would be an invaluable asset for any organization.

In the end, the problem being confronted is the age-old question of what it means to be an educated person. The suggestion here is that we as individuals and as a society have much to gain by viewing education as the process of continually developing our ability to direct ourselves in an enlightened manner with the goal of forming critical awareness of the world around us throughout our lives.

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Mock Depositions Benefit Everyone

Elizabeth O. Bailey and Deborah A. Brodeur

The following piece by two recent graduates of Massachusetts Bay's Court Reporting Program affirms the value of experiential learning.

Goodwin, Procter & Hoar is a prominent law firm located in downtown Boston. Each year this firm, in association with the Court Reporting Program at our school, Massachusetts Bay Community College, conducts a training session on deposition procedures for their newly hired attorneys. The new attorneys and reporting students participate together in conducting these mock depositions. This year eight students from Massachusetts Bay were selected to participate in the exercise, and we were two of those students.

Although we were excited at the prospect of gaining practical experience, we were also nervous about our ability to handle the actual reporting of the deposition and about presenting ourselves as professionals. Our nervousness was manifested in many ways:

1) Reviewing the colloquy symbols ad nauseam;
2) Repeatedly studying maps of downtown Boston;
3) Comparing, for the two weeks prior to the deposition, what outfits we'd wear; and
4) Planning a strategy to follow if asked to read back unintelligible notes.

Prior to the date of the mock depositions, we received informational materials. So when the day finally arrived we were calmer than we had anticipated we might be.

On the day of the mock depositions, as we'd been repeatedly taught to do by our instructors, we arrived at the law firm half an hour prior to the scheduled starting time. There we were greeted by Mr. Thomas J. Griffin Jr., who is the law firm's trial training director. He gave us a brief explanation of what was about to transpire.

Then we were escorted into various conference rooms, where we each met the four attorneys who were being critiqued in our mock depositions. Two

represented the plaintiff and two the defendant. We also were introduced to the three attorneys who would do the critiquing. One of these would act as the witness.

The new attorneys appeared anxious, yet very pleasant and cooperative. We worked together to decide how certain procedures in the deposition would be handled--such as handling stipulations, swearing the witness, and marking the exhibits.

The deposition itself went smoother than we expected; however, we had significant problems reporting objections and arguments between attorneys.

Our mock deposition lasted approximately an hour and a half. During this exercise, we were requested to swear the witness, handle stipulations, read back, and mark exhibits. Perhaps the hardest thing for us to do was to interrupt the attorneys when we realized we were dropping testimony. Though the attorneys were very considerate of our student status and didn't seem to mind the interruptions, the only way we'll ultimately gain the confidence to know that our interruptions are valid is by increasing shorthand speed.

We found this experience to be a very positive and beneficial one. Some of our fears--particularly about carrying out basic deposition procedures--have now been alleviated. We encourage other students to participate in similar exercises. Mock depositions such as these can be an invaluable learning experience for reporting students.

First published in the *National Shorthand Reporter*, June 1988. Reprinted with permission.

Why Seek NSRA Approval?

Ann M. Farrey-Hart
Professor, Business Careers
Coordinator, Court Reporting Program

We reporting educators owe it to our students to offer them quality programs. And we owe it both to those students and to the profession as a whole to educate future reporters who have goals in tune with their profession and their professional association, as well as with the technologically advanced workplace they're entering. Finally, we owe it to our schools to enhance their reputations by supporting such quality programs.

Several years ago we began our own reporter training program with only twenty students. We had a working court reporter as adviser, the standards of NSRA's Board on Approved Reporter Training (BART) as our bible, and near limitless enthusiasm. The help and support we received from reporters on a local and national basis since then has been remarkable.

I was reminded of these facts the other night, when I received a phone call from a new reporting teacher. Question after question revealed a real desire to help the students, but also a lack of understanding of reporter education and the existence of NSRA's available store of knowledge and guidance.

My first piece of advice to school administrators who offer programs in court reporting is to seek NSRA approval by incorporating into their programs those BART standards we used as our bible. Specifically, I offer them the following advice:

Prepare. When you seek NSRA approval of your court reporting program, you must be prepared. In this way you can avoid the frustration of convincing your school administration they should finance the approval, completing the paperwork involved, and having a site evaluation, only to receive a notice from NSRA that your documentation was incomplete.

If you're considering seeking NSRA approval, or if your program is up for a reevaluation of its existing approval, take the time to answer thoroughly the self-evaluation that is provided. Read the minimum standards carefully and make sure your program contains all the required parts. Have syllabi for all your courses, and be certain the BART standards are covered in these documents. Be very thorough about the information that goes into your school catalog, too; it needs to include certain necessary data.

Above all, call NSRA for advice. These people are there to help you, and they will.

* * *

What are the benefits of NSRA approval? In our case, approval has aided in the growth of our reporting program and kept us educating in tune with the profession. We've also gained much education ourselves--in addition to tremendous motivation for our faculty--by attending BART's teacher workshops.

For us, NSRA is not some organization far away that we read about. It's a vital part of our daily lives, an organization that has served us and allowed us to serve it in return. In fact, we've been motivated by those experiences to become involved in our state association as well. Here are some of the ways we've been involved locally and nationally: as members of BART and numerous seminar committees, by hosting certification tests and committee meetings, and by contributing to local and national reporter publications.

Approval has meant a lot to our students, too. What a thrill it is to see our graduates sitting for the RPR and CM tests every November and May, and to see them doing so well in their careers.

Thanks to BART's guidelines, we give our students important goals while they're in school. There are important competencies they must achieve to be entry-level reporters. The approval process helps us decide on appropriate goals and aids us in structuring the learning environment accordingly.

As a result, our students understand why they need knowledge in legal, medical, and technical areas, in addition to shorthand and English language skills. They begin early on to think of the reality of technology as a part of their future careers. Basically, NSRA approval has helped keep them from being shortchanged in the educational contract they've made with us.

Finally, the court reporting profession is enriched through the approval process by being provided with marketable, well-educated, and dedicated new reporters who are ready to learn from experienced reporters, to work hard, to succeed, and finally to give back to future students part of the knowledge and experience they've gained from being part of the profession themselves.

Why seek NSRA approval? Because it benefits everyone involved.

First published in the *National Shorthand Reporter,* February 1988. Reprinted with permission.

Adventures in Culture Sharing: Promoting the Mission of the Community College

Cynthia R. Butters
Associate Professor and Department Chair
Practical Nursing Program

Most community colleges shape their mission to reflect the needs of the communities they serve. The mission of Massachusetts Bay Community College (MBCC) is to serve as an open-access, comprehensive, student-centered educational institution. The college provides specialized educational programs and student support services. To support academic excellence, MBCC requires associate degree graduates to demonstrate competency in several areas: reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, computer literacy, technological literacy, and global and ethnic understanding. The last-named competency will be the focus of this essay.

The Practical Nursing Program

In 1986, MBCC developed a certificate Practical Nursing Program, a direct, career-entry program that has proved especially attractive to minority and disadvantaged students. The program is an intense, full-time endeavor with a tightly structured curriculum. All classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences directly support the practical nursing knowledges and skills necessary to prepare for the national licensure exam. Faculty find themselves hard pressed to meet the basic curriculum needs, as well as sorely tempted to quietly ignore the beautifully worded mission statement.

Since our graduates receive a certificate, not a degree, many in the college community do not expect them to demonstrate the graduation competencies. Nonetheless, the Practical Nursing faculty have found a way to develop competency in cross-cultural understanding.

Practical Nursing students arrive with all the anticipations, strengths, and "baggage" of typical community college students. Of particular concern is the low self-esteem of many students, who are deeply afraid of failure or have suffered more than their share of life's setbacks. Immigrant students are often shy about their backgrounds and English-speaking abilities. Most students demonstrate concern about their ability to be successful in the student role. In one class of forty were students born on five different continents and the Caribbean Islands.

From Class Project to International Day

The following describes the evolution of a small class project with limited objectives into an activity involving the campus and community and promoting cross-cultural understanding.

The Practical Nursing Program's basic nutrition course requires an appreciation of the importance of cultural differences in food selection and preparation. An obvious teaching approach in a racially and culturally diverse class was to use the students as experts in their own cultures. Students were directed to prepare nutritionally balanced meals from their own or from a chosen culture and to explain aspects of the culture in posters. Students worked in teams and became quite competitive about the food presentations. Competent at organizing and preparing meals from their own cultures, students directed their energies to making the team presentations the best possible.

At the first event, students were filled with pride at their own tables; then they quickly moved around to sample the other cultural tables. As soon as it was determined that too much food was on hand, students literally dragged other students and faculty in to share the food. A good time as well as a unique learning experience was had by anyone on the campus who had ventured near.

In evaluating the first experience in culture sharing, faculty realized that student self-esteem had improved greatly. Student relationships were smoother and more mutually respectful, and the general tone of the class improved. "Breaking bread" with one another had reduced some of the suspicion and hostility observed prior to the event.

The number of immigrant and first-generation people in this small group surprised the faculty. They were not limited to minority groups. Many of the students had initially tried to downplay their ties with the "old world" and to blend into the "melting pot." This experience renewed appreciation of the culture of origin as well as other cultures. Tolerance and respect for differences definitely improved campus-wide after this event.

Faculty decided to schedule the event a second time, but earlier in the semester. The entire satellite campus of two hundred students and faculty would be invited to attend.

The second year the event was larger due to more Practical Nursing students. Some had attended the previous year's event and were most helpful with ideas for improvement. In-house publicity brought enthusiastic suggestions from faculty and staff. Cultural artifacts and music lent an added dimension to the event. The

same types of learning, sharing, and improved self-esteem were seen on a larger scale. We did note problems when one group played its music to the exclusion of the other groups.

In the third year, the coordinator of Massachusetts Bay's Travel/Tourism Program asked whether his students could join the project. For each of the planned nutrition tables, his students would provide a display that included geographic, cultural, and travel information. Faculty accepted this proposal with enthusiasm.

The Travel/Tourism Program brought an entirely new dimension to our formerly small project. The coordinator gently insisted on improved public relations and sent press releases to the local media. It had never occurred to the Practical Nursing faculty that people in the community would be interested. Interested they were!

The Travel/Tourism students energetically gathered cultural information and artifacts, maps, and posters as well as facts about the realities of traveling to the countries and cultures represented. There was some communication among the teams, but not much was required, as the focus of presentations was so different.

By this time, the project had been named International Day. Eight different countries and cultures were represented. The "New England Traditional" team had prepared a Thanksgiving Dinner for all. The team dressed as Pilgrims and easily drew attention to their display. Visitors who were reluctant to approach unfamiliar faces and cultures were quite comfortable starting at this table, and, once in the mood, proceeding to the rest.

Various anecdotes will convey the flavor of the occasion. The Irish table had persuaded the local Irish tavern to lend the waitresses' costumes, and this lent a festive note to the display. The Mexican table included foods and artifacts from some Hispanic cultures. The Travel/Tourism group focused on other Hispanic cultures. Two separate tables displayed different Caribbean cultures and included costumes and artifacts. Many unique foods were imported from the area. The Italian table provided many familiar and some unfamiliar foods. Verdi was prominently played but only in the allotted time span. Each culture had a reserved time to play their music, thus avoiding the problems of the previous year.

Community college faculty are frequently reminded that some of their students are two steps ahead of them. Faculty were pleasantly surprised to find that three of the five team members of the Scandinavian table were black. No explanations were offered or requested. This particular team was already light years into cross-cultural understanding and harmony.

An African table represented Nigeria and provided insight into that land. One of the Travel/Tourism students became frustrated at the lack of an Israeli

table, so she provided both food and travel displays. Other countries and cultures represented at this and past projects included Swiss, French, West African, Southern Black-American, and Taiwanese. Complaints duly and cheerfully noted about the absence of Greek and Armenian cultural tables were countered with promises to recruit students from these cultures for the next year.

The presence of the Travel/Tourism displays significantly enhanced the overall learning at the project. Visitors spent a lot of time viewing maps and improving their knowledge of geography and cultures. The nursing students seemed surprised and delighted that the others would go to so much time and trouble. The opportunity to learn about more than nutrition was well utilized by students and visitors as well as faculty.

International Day highlighted then current global concerns. For example, one of the Scandinavian students was surprised that she enjoyed a delicacy identified afterwards as "oxtail." In mock despair, she declared, "I could have brought reindeer samples, but we can't have reindeer for another three years after Chernobyl!" She had just identified a change in her lifestyle due to a major but far-removed global event. Some students from the Caribbean apologized profusely for the lack of a few favorite foodstuffs, explaining that Hurricane Gilbert had cut off the supply. Haitian students expressed quiet concern about political upheaval and worry about relatives. International Day had renewed emotional ties to the homelands, as well as enlightened others about the smallness of our world.

Many visited from the local community and seemed to learn from as well as enjoy the event. Children from the local day care center squealed with delight at the different displays. One neighbor introduced herself and an elderly Alzheimer's victim for whom she provided day care. At one point, the patient was thought to be missing, and fifteen people sprang instantly into action, only to find her resting in a chair. The quick response was touching and indicative of community concern for its members.

The event lasted just short of two hours and culminated in a large group dancing to Caribbean music. Within fifteen minutes, everyone stopped to help clean up, and then all went on to their next classes. This pointed to a major strength of this particular population: age and maturity. The group eagerly indulged in and learned from the event but recognized they had to move on to other responsibilities.

Valuable Lessons

The faculty and students will surely run this event again. We learned many valuable lessons from it. First and foremost is that many students generally labeled as "disadvantaged" do come with numerous strengths. Community college faculty can collectively develop creative approaches using these strengths to foster learning. The learning need not be limited to specific class objectives but can optimally incorporate the college mission for all students. Clearly, improved cross-cultural understanding as well as enhanced student self-esteem and confidence are outcomes of this type of event. Faculty commitment to the college mission resulted in joint projects with diverse groups that enabled the learning of all. Faculty willingness to recognize and promote opportunities together demonstrates the true meaning of the term *community* college.

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OCT 1 2 1990